

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY, 1901



A NOVEL COMPLICATION

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I.

ONE morning not many months ago a New York news-gatherer dwelt, with a glow of self-satisfaction, upon the following nugget of information that had been added to his credit by the city editor of a noted daily. He alone of the reportorial pack, as an omission in the local items of all rival journals proved, had tracked a British lion from a steamer's pier to a Fifth Avenue hotel. He had given publicity to his achievement in these words:

"William Farquhar Barton, the famous novelist, of Birmingham, England, was a passenger on the steamship *Lucania*, which reached this city yesterday. The noted author avoided all interviewers at the dock and was driven at once to the Hotel Waldorf. Mr. Barton has won international fame by his triumphs in the school of epigrammatic and realistic fiction. He is the author of the novels, 'A Bachelor's Diary,' 'Love in a Palace,' 'Men, Women, and Murder,' 'What Mr. Periwinkle Thought of Himself,' 'Too Much Money,' 'A Cynic's Honeymoon,' 'A Spinster's Soul,' etc. Under the management of Professor Trotter, Mr. Barton will give in this country a series of readings from his works. The great vogue of his powerful stories among people of culture assures the success of his American tour. Mr. Barton could not be seen last night, but to-morrow's *Trumpet* will contain a long interview with a daring genius who concocts daintily-spiced dishes from the raw material of life or stuffs the boiled rice of realism with the juiciest plums of wit."

That the star reporter had written the concluding sentence of his journalistic tidbit with an egotistic thrill, the dullest reader could well imagine. The article closed with a startling flourish designed to illustrate the fact that the metropolitan press is rich in the possession of epigrammatic realists, or realistic epigrammatists, who could readily become successful novelists did they not prefer the intoxicating joys of the reportorial life. William Farquhar Barton would read the *Daily Trumpet's* announcement of his arrival in New York and would be forced to the reflection that in the presence of America's journalistic writers he had no right to plume himself on style! The *Trumpet's* reporter had evidently penned his article with the stars and stripes draped across his shoulders.

Among the guests at the Hotel Waldorf to first peruse the above-quoted item in the *Daily Trumpet* was William F. Barton, of Birmingham, England, iron manufacturer, unrelated by either blood or pursuits to William Farquhar Barton, novelist. In Manchester nobody had ever confounded the two men. A wag had once labelled them respectively "Iron Barton" and "Ironical Barton." The fame of the latter had made its way across the sea, but the former had remained practically unknown outside of his native land.

The Birmingham manufacturer had been too busy turning iron into gold to read the works of his noted fellow-townsmen, who had found his fortune in coining phrases. Nevertheless, William F. Barton was not ignorant of the movements of William Farquhar Barton. He knew that the very day which had found himself and his wife setting out from England for America had witnessed the departure of the novelist from Birmingham for the Holy Land. It had been whispered that the author had in contemplation a master-piece to be called "The Pilgrimage of a Realist," the work to form the initial third of a great trilogy, for Barton, the novelist, had reached an altitude in literature that rendered a trilogy imperative. He had determined to visit Jerusalem, Mecca, and Benares to gather material for a trio of realistic stories that should make secure his place in Art, while, at the same time, they won for him recognition in the realm of Science.

If he had been told that he, a conscientious novelist with a mission in life, resembled Don Quixote setting out to destroy giants that had never existed, the Birmingham realist would have smiled in derision. With a theory of Art for a shield and armed with epigrams for darts, William Farquhar Barton had sallied forth from Birmingham fully determined to slay Romance with three stupendous blows. It was nonsense to suppose that any old windmill could befool a champion who saw clearly that Truth must no longer be a stranger to Fiction, that the time had come for satire and statistics to confound the dreamers.

That Barton, the manufacturer, displayed amazement as he read

the *Daily Trumpet* the morning after his arrival at the Hotel Waldorf was not, therefore, surprising. In repose the Englishman's countenance was stern in outline, with heavy features, ruddy complexion, and a forehead indicating force of will. He was bald, portly, well-preserved, carefully dressed; smooth-shaven around his large, firm mouth and heavy chin. Aggressive little tufts of gray side-whiskers relieved the monotony of his expansive cheeks. His eyes, small, keen, and dark, bore witness to his mental activity and perfect digestion. His was the outward seeming of a man who has taken delight in his struggle with the world and has preserved sufficient vitality at fifty to enjoy the leisure that success has won for him.

Barton and his wife were breakfasting in the privacy of their apartments. Mrs. Barton, glancing at her husband across the table, was astonished to see that an alien newspaper had exercised a softening influence upon her spouse, whose severe face seldom relaxed until business hours were at an end. But there sat William F. Barton at nine o'clock in the morning of his first day in America not merely smiling, but actually indulging in the luxury of a grin. Mrs. Barton awaited patiently the explanation of her husband's unwonted hilarity. Thin, pale, large-eyed, with hair still black and inclined to curl, Mrs. Barton seemed to be merely a feminine fragment worn down by the friction of her husband's triumphant career. Ten years his junior, the expression of self-repression and humility upon her anæmic but not unpleasing face told her tale of unconditional surrender to Barton's dominating personality. The laughter gleaming in her husband's face found its reflection in the smile that played across her thin lips.

"I have heard, William, that the American newspapers are extremely humorous," remarked Mrs. Barton, as she put down her coffee-cup and became for the moment a sympathetic interrogation-point.

"They are, Elizabeth! they are!" exclaimed Barton, laughing aloud and displaying a set of flawless teeth. "Tell me, Mrs. Barton, do I look like a literary man? Does my personality suggest to you the possibility that I could have written—ah—'Men, Women, and Murder,' or—ah—'A Spinster's Soul'?"

Mr. Barton's laughter became so hilarious, his cheeks grew so red, and his breath so short, that his good wife sprang to her feet in alarm.

"Don't—ah—don't be frightened, Elizabeth," cried her husband, controlling his merriment sharply, and motioning to her to be seated. "The joke is amusing, but—ah—rather rough on the novelist, don't you think?"

Barton pushed his copy of the *Trumpet* towards his wife, and pointed with a plump finger to the item that had convinced him that the American press was worthy of its world-wide reputation for humor. Somewhat to his surprise, Mrs. Barton's face showed no sympathy with

her husband's playful attitude towards the *Trumpet's* astonishing blunder. As she perused the item that had tickled her husband's sense of the ridiculous, a flush crept into her cheeks, and when her eyes again met Barton's a light that he could not explain shone therein. The *Trumpet's* sacrifice of truth to enterprise had affected her deeply, but it was evident to Barton that it had appealed to some emotion to which laughter gave no vent. He eyed her sharply as he said:

"Don't be cast down, Elizabeth. We are still young, you and I. We will outlive this affliction. Have courage, my child. Do I not bear it bravely? I have the heart to laugh, Elizabeth! I—who have been taken for the author of—ah—'What Mr. Periwinkle Thought of Himself,' and—ah—other rubbish."

"Rubbish, William?" exclaimed Mrs. Barton protestingly, while she drummed nervously with thin fingers upon the breakfast-cloth.

"Rubbish. Of course it's rubbish!" Mr. Barton waved a pudgy hand in the air, as if he would free the world by one contemptuous gesture of all realistic fiction. "I haven't read it, of course. Have you, Elizabeth?"

Mrs. Barton jumped as though she had been suddenly stung by a vagabond bee. Her husband's voice and face were stern.

"I—I—William—you—know—I take some local pride in—in—Farquhar Barton's—success. He—he—has made—made Birmingham famous."

Mr. Barton leaned back in his chair, seemingly inclined to gasp for breath. He appeared to be in danger of drowning unless he could find a footing at once upon a new point of view.

"You mean to tell me, Mrs. Barton," he said slowly, "that you really believe that these—ah—nasty books of this—ah—Farquhar Barton reflect credit upon—ah—Birmingham, England?"

Mrs. Barton had grown pale and sad. She lacked the vitality to defend a noble school of fiction against the attack of a victorious Philistine. Fortunately, however, for her temporary peace of mind, their soft-footed, wooden-faced attendant approached the breakfast-table at that moment carrying a tray upon which lay several letters, a telegram, and a calling-card. Mr. Barton gazed at the approaching menaces to his comfort with grim astonishment. A foreboding of evil seemed to have entered the room with the man. A glance at the calling-card hurled the Englishman to his feet. He stood staring at the phlegmatic attendant, as if the latter had been responsible for stretching a joke into a nuisance.

"Look at that, Mrs. Barton," exclaimed her husband, extending his arm across the table and handing her the card.

Upon the pasteboard Mrs. Barton read the name. "Professor Trotter."

"What do you intend to do about all this, William?" she asked gently, glancing meaningly at the letters and telegram. Barton re-seated himself and opened the despatch. It read as follows:

"The Writers' Club beg your acceptance of a dinner to-night. Please answer."

Barton sat silent for a time, scowling alternately at his wife and the man. Presently he said to the latter:

"Show Professor Trotter in, and send this telegram at once."

Barton's telegram was addressed to the Writers' Club and ran as follows:

"Thanks awfully. Gladly accept dinner. Send it here before seven. Am going to the theatre.

"WILLIAM F. BARTON."

II.

PROFESSOR TROTTER had been endowed at birth with an enthusiastic temperament, which had served him well in his contact with a cold, unsympathetic world. His was one of those rare natures whose drafts upon the Bank of Optimism are never dishonored. In school, in college, and, later on, as a teacher of English literature, Noah Trotter, M.A., had overpassed all obstacles in his pathway by simply underestimating their size. He had found in opposition a stimulant and in rivalry a recreation. He had always chosen a combat in preference to a compromise, and had come to look upon diplomacy as the last resort of weaklings. A man who prided himself upon his tactfulness was, to the mind of Professor Trotter, unfitted to deal with the larger affairs of life. "In all lines of human endeavor," he was fond of saying, "you will find the wholesalers and the retailers. Among the latter I could never win success. I must strive in a comprehensive way for great rewards. If I come to fall at last, sir, be sure that I shall tumble from no insignificant height."

The commodity in which Professor Trotter dealt, in a wholesale way, was fame. He had practically effected a corner in celebrities. He knew to a nicety when an author, artist, scientist, or statesman had grown, as he bluntly put it to himself, "ripe enough to pluck." Reminded one day of his early struggles with the ancient Roman tongue, he had flushed with pride to discover that a few scraps of Latin still obeyed the mandate of his will. From the lumber-room to which his brain had relegated these remnants of his undergraduate acquisitions he had dragged forth the motto which has served for many years to give to Professor Trotter's stationery a touch of classic elegance. If you, my reader, have reached, by any reputable pathway, a pinnacle in the mountainous realm of publicity, you, at one time or another,

must have received an epistle from Trotter's International Lecture Bureau. You may remember that you were impressed by the pertinence of the legend—"Facies ad Faciam"—at the top of the letter-head. "How charmingly appropriate!" you murmured, realizing that Professor Trotter sought to bring you, a man of note, face to face with a public impatient to gaze upon your illuminated countenance.

If, carried away by the promises held forth to you by the International Lecture Bureau, you have conversed with Professor Trotter in the privacy of his inner office,—a retreat to which only those who have been elevated to the First Degree of the Noble Order of Notables are admitted,—you have carried away with you renewed regard for yourself and your own achievements and a warm admiration for Professor Trotter's overpowering personality. His tall, lank figure, and bright, restless eyes you will never forget. His black-and-white hair and beard, harmonizing so well with his spotless linen, his white tie, and his well-cut, modish suit of speckless black will remain forever in your memory, recalling always the pleasing reflection that Professor Trotter, when he vouchsafed to you an audience, was attired in a costume befitting the solemnity of the occasion. You may remember that your eye wandered over his unwrinkled exterior, seeking vainly to discover the hiding-place of the Trump of Fame.

From your first interview with Professor Trotter you carried away a sensation of ecstatic self-satisfaction. You strutted from his sanctum sanctorum with the bearing of a man who has been permitted to gaze upon posterity grouped around a marble statue and shouting your name aloud. You went into Trotter's presence a finite being. You issued therefrom convinced of your immortality. If time, quieting your pulse, has permitted you to recollect the details of your reception by the Professor, you will acknowledge to yourself that Trotter uttered a hundred words to your one. Not that Trotter wasted words. His thorough grasp of the existing situation enabled him to dispense with irrelevant verbiage while he informed you, pithily but at some length, that the time had come for you to seize Fame by the forelock. You were made to realize that between you and your highest ambition there remained no obstacle but Trotter, who would permit you to stand face to face with your ultimate goal for a very reasonable commission.

It was upon stars of the first magnitude only that Professor Trotter ever called in person. Even Barton, the noted English novelist, was not quite worthy of a visit from the head of the International Lecture Bureau. But there was a mystery about the Birmingham realist's unexpected arrival in New York that had led Trotter to waive ceremony, that he might the sooner quiet the itching of a curiosity seldom disturbing

a man whose epidermis had been hardened by habitual contact with celebrities.

Barton and his wife had arisen to greet their caller, who had entered the room with a suddenness that had disturbed even the Englishman's habitual poise. Trotter bore down upon the latter like a long, trim yacht headed for a merchantman at anchor.

"My dear Barton," cried the Professor, seizing the ironmaster's reluctant hand. "You have achieved a stupendous success. You have managed to catch New York napping. Mrs. Barton, I believe. Permit me. But, sir, I have a bone to pick with you. By the way, you have done well, Barton, to withhold your picture from the public prints. You flush, sir. I apologize and will explain. You misunderstand me, Barton. I am casting no reflection upon your personal appearance, I assure you—though you are older, more sedate, sir, than I had been led to believe. What I meant to infer, Barton, was that your modesty regarding your forceful—may I say unliterary?—countenance had piqued public curiosity. I will admit frankly, sir, that I was greatly annoyed at your rejection of my recent offer. I'm glad, Barton, that you have changed your mind. You come here at an opportune moment. The novel-reading public of America has been informed that your retiring disposition has led you to reject all invitations to mount the platform. When I notify them that you have condescended to place yourself in my hands for a few high-priced recitals in our leading cities your success will be instantly assured. The fact that you have never read in public across the water will make your appearance here——"

"But—ah—Mr.—Professor——" gasped Barton, who still stood erect, glancing alternately from his loquacious visitor to Mrs. Barton, who had sunk, pale and speechless, into her chair.

"I know what you are about to say," exclaimed Trotter, while a smile broke through his beard, to convey, to whom it might concern, the gentle hint that he needed no further enlightenment regarding the eccentricities of genius. "I know what you are about to say, Barton. You are not an elocutionist, and you don't crave further notoriety, and all that. I have it all down in the letters you wrote to me. But you are in my power now, sir. You had the advantage of me, Barton, while the Atlantic Ocean rolled between us, but you have put your inspired head, sir, into the lion's mouth. Now, Barton, the time has come—ha-ha!—for you to become the lion's mouth and for me to act as the inspired head. You follow me, Mrs. Barton, do you not? No, thank you, I must not sit down at this time. I'm due at my office and must hurry away. I am anxious, Barton, to cut my working-day short that I may return to you this afternoon to lay before you my plan of campaign. The fact is——"

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"Hold, sir!" shouted Barton, pounding the breakfast table with his fist, and then drawing himself up to his full height and glaring at Trotter angrily. "You have made a mistake, sir. You have——"

"I never make mistakes, Barton," remarked Trotter coolly, stroking his beard and meeting the Englishman's gaze steadily. "I regret, sir, that you do. But you must make none here, Barton. There's a fortune awaiting you in this country if you will calm yourself—calm yourself, Barton, and put yourself freely and confidently into my hands. Mrs. Barton, I can see by your face that you grasp the situation. I shall take the liberty of leaving to you the task of persuading your gifted husband to take full advantage of the flood-tide of his fame. And now, Barton, I will say 'good-morning.' Try to adjust yourself, sir, to new ideas and a novel environment—though these are—ha-ha!—a part of your outfit, to be sure. Mrs. Barton, my compliments. I will be with you again, Barton, not later than four o'clock. And, so, au revoir."

With another smile that testified to the leniency of a noble nature towards the peculiarities of the creative temperament, Professor Trotter glided from the room with rapidity and grace.

"Well, I'm d——d!" exclaimed Barton, dropping into his chair, while his eyes still lingered upon the door-way through which the Professor had made his breezy exit.

"Please—please don't swear, William," murmured Mrs. Barton, gazing at her husband with mingled surprise and pleading in her large eyes.

"Pardon me—ah—Mrs. Barton," murmured the Englishman in a dazed way. "Did I—ah—really swear, Mrs. Barton?"

III.

A STRAIGHT line drawn from the Hotel Waldorf to the most thickly populated block in New York City is not remarkable for length, but in the contrasts afforded by its extremities the philosopher must find rich food for reflection. Stanton Street and Fifth Avenue! Behold the factors of a mighty problem, upon whose ultimate solution rests the vindication of our vaunted modern progress.

The reconciliation of the slums with the avenues! Is it a delusion of dreamers or a nut that American ingenuity and common sense shall crack?

A praiseworthy longing in the heart of man has assumed the garb of Science and calls itself Political Economy. What is it in reality? A war of words, a jumble of syllogisms and statistics, a pretender in motley, a pompous, good-natured creature with a thousand faces and an impediment in its speech. A science, quotha? Behold a science without a terminology, with no law that is not disputed, with no teacher

who clasps the hand of a fellow-teacher! 'Tis recognized in the colleges, you say? Well, what of that? It has but added another dead language to the curriculum, and each college translates this manufactured, lifeless tongue to suit the predilections of its own professor and his assistants.

Meanwhile the slums and the avenues know little of each other. You, my reader, live and move and have your being within the Waldorf's radius of influence. Now and then you discuss "the condition of the masses" at your club, and assume, perhaps, an attitude of sympathetic comprehension towards that congestion of humanity known to you vaguely as "the East Side." But practically your philanthropy has been bounded by the tramp who accosted you in Fourth Avenue and the beggar to whom you gave alms upon upper Broadway. You have never pushed past these sentinels of the destitute to visit their armies encamped along the river-fronts. To you New York is a small, jealous, self-satisfied, but wholly admirable community made up exclusively of "the people whom you know."

Now, while William F. Barton, of Birmingham, England, is endeavoring to recover his equilibrium in his rooms at the Hotel Waldorf, will you come with me, oh reader, into Stanton Street for an illuminating morning-stroll? The odor of overcrowded humanity will not offend your nostrils to-day, for there is a cool autumn breeze sweeping in from the sea, to rejoice alike the people whom you know and the outcasts to whom I am about to introduce you.

Upon all sides of you, my friend, you will witness the revenge taken by Realism upon the worshippers of Romance. We are treading streets that the emigrant, setting out from his European home, saw paved with gold in the lying dreams he dreamed. This is the Watling's Island of men who thought to come upon Cipango and Cathay, who sailed westward to find at a rainbow's roots a pot of gold.

To make this teeming square mile what it is,—a confusion of tongues, a crazy quilt of racial remnants,—all the nations of the earth have contributed their superfluous men and women. Here is to be found the raw material with which a Great Experiment concerns itself. These overcrowded blocks are New York's Philippines. They lie somewhere to the eastward, inhabited by a mongrel population, to which the churches send out missionaries and concerning which the native-born New Yorker feels but a languid interest.

This morning the task with which the New World's metropolis has charged itself seems not so difficult. The Chinaman, the Slav, the Hungarian Jew, the German, the Irishman, the Italian, and the Swede, enlivened by the bracing air of an autumnal day, display no outward sign of the fact that they are disappointed Argonauts. They elbow each other in the narrow streets of the Polyglot Square-Mile with

mutual indifference to the discomfort they are causing one another. They have not found the gold they came across the sea to seek, but they know that the avenues uptown are lined with palaces. From Stanton Street to the Waldorf is but a short distance as the crow flies. Courage, then, Wong Foo, Svorak, Altheimer, O'Sullivan, Signor Macaroni, and the rest of you! A little pluck and patience are all that you require, and you will find your wildest Old World dreams made real. "Step lively" on the Bowery, strangers, and some day you will have leisure to stroll along Fifth Avenue! Ye have come, oh many-tongued riffraff, not to the mouth of a gold mine, but to the confines of a realm above the entrance to which shine the words: "America is Opportunity. Many are Called, but Few are Chosen." If you will grasp the full significance of this enlightening legend, oh Wong Foo, Svorak, Altheimer, O'Sullivan, Signor Macaroni, and the rest of you, you may rise by the stepping-stones of live issues to higher things. - How many an Old World chrysalis has become a Tammany butterfly through the benign influence of popular ideals! You see, my friends, the Polyglot Square-Mile still strives to keep alive the belief that "all men were created free and equal." Uptown collectors of curious historical data, meanwhile, label this picturesque generality "early American."

Let it not be inferred from the foregoing that in Stanton Street and its environments there live no native-born New Yorkers. In fact, you have taken a cross-town car with me this morning, gentle reader, to enter the scantily-furnished apartments of a brother and sister whose paternal and maternal ancestors talked Dutch to each other when Nieuw Amsterdam was still Nieuw Amsterdam. The small, poverty-stricken home in which these orphaned patricians carry on their weary struggle against a pitiless world forms a real American oasis in a desert of alien abodes. Margaret Steendam and her brother Rutger are the only native-born Americans in a crowded apartment-house that might well pass as the Tower of Babel out upon a slumming expedition. This fact, known to their neighbors, has been of no service to them in their futile efforts to make both ends meet. Knickerbockers run to seed have no claim to sympathy from East Side immigrants. The Steendams have been vouchsafed three centuries in which to push their fortunes in the New World. Let them starve in the slums, then, that the latest peasants to reach Castle Garden may get an opportunity to wax fat and to hold office! Of a surety there must be something inherently unworthy in a strain of blood that fattened burgomasters in one century to demand nourishment of impecunious East Siders less than three hundred years later!

Rutger Steendam gazed from the front window of the small flat in which he and his sister paid their penalty for an ancestral lack of

foresight. A slender, pale-faced, blue-eyed youth, with a sensitive mouth, thin nostrils, and thoughtful brow, above which waved a growth of curly, golden-tinted hair, this scion of a decayed race found no joy in the fact that a sunny, invigorating morning had aroused the East Side to renewed efforts in the cause of Progress. At the entrance to a beer-saloon across the narrow street stood a well-fed, contented-looking German. Rutger Steendam found himself wondering what Herman Eidnitz, whose name glittered in gilt splendor above the door-way, had eaten for breakfast.

"You are going out, Rutger?" questioned a gentle voice, interrupting the young man's unromantic reverie.

"Yes, Margaret," answered the youth drearily, turning to look down at his sister, who was plying a needle steadily, a maiden seemingly doomed to hard labor for life to expiate a crime that nobody had committed. She resembled her brother in the delicate, symmetrical outlines of her face, but her luxuriant hair was more reddish than golden, while her eyes, large, as were his, were changeable in their coloring, brown at times, and again almost black.

"Don't be discouraged, Rutger," said the girl, glancing upward at her brother for an instant, while her countenance, too care-worn to be beautiful, glowed with the light of a great love. "It is very hard, I know, to beg in vain for merely a chance to work. But something must come to you soon. I know it, I feel it. Is not that something, Rutger, dear?"

The young man's gaze took in all the significant details of the scene before him. The bare walls of the apartment, the uncovered wooden table in the centre of the room, an old-fashioned sofa across one corner, facing a few shelves upon which stood a collection of strangely-assorted books, picked up at random in second-hand shops, and last, though by no means least, a pine-wood writing-desk close to the window, upon which lay scattered scraps of cheap scribbling-paper. The youth's blue eyes rested long upon these outward and visible signs of his soul's dearest wish.

"Even a pauper, Margaret, can come upon a pad and a pencil," he murmured, approaching the desk and placing a thin but well-shaped hand upon the topmost sheets, across which ran the imprint of a neat chirography. A smile of bitterness played about his sensitive mouth as he added: "A pad, a pencil, and the inspiration! These combined, Margaret, make a poet. Unfortunately, stamps and an appreciative editor are required to make the poet prosperous. I have been putting salt upon the tail of a shadow at two cents a pinch, Margaret, not counting the cost of envelopes and return postage."

The girl had laid aside her work for a moment, and sat gazing at her brother with troubled eyes. It had never been his habit to com-

plain because a world surfeited with verse, but ever craving poetry, had failed to despatch a crown of bays to Stanton Street for the troubled brow of one Rutger Steendam. He had, in fact, long ago openly abandoned his once-cherished hope that truth set to music by a poet's soul might serve as a charm to open the stubborn gate-way to fame and fortune. The acid flavor of her brother's present speech surprised and saddened the cheerful, courageous little needle-woman. She said nothing, however, and the young man, shamed by the expression resting upon her upturned face, removed his hand from his superfluous manuscript and fumbled in a pigeon-hole of the desk until he had extracted therefrom a package of newspaper-clippings.

"Wanted—Males—Miscellaneous," he read aloud. "It's curious, Margaret, how much assistance this great city seems to need in its work until you go forth and attempt to give it aid and encouragement. I answered ten advertisements yesterday, and came back with the feeling that fate had fashioned me for a man of leisure. As a Miscellaneous Male I am a dire failure. I've been everything, sister, from a porter to a reporter, but the end is always the same."

He turned his gaze from his sister's tear-dimmed eyes and glanced down at his threadbare clothes and shabby shoes.

"I'm going now, Margaret," he said presently. "The newspapers assert that a wave of prosperity has overtaken this deserving land. It's a beautiful day. It may be I shall be able to find my way towards the 'good times' we read about. I hope to be back in time for——"

At that moment a rap at the door, towards which the employment-seeker had drawn, drove the sempstress to her feet and deepened the pallor upon her brother's face. Morning visitors to the Steendam's flat were never of the kind that win a welcome from the poor.

"Come in," cried the young man, facing the door-way in the attitude of a youth whose shoulders can bear no further weight of misfortune.

"This is Mr. Rutger Steendam?" asked a smooth, carefully-modulated voice, a precious possession of a thick-set, clean-shaven, soberly-attired man in middle life, who had entered the room with a smile upon his face that seemed to be a torch sent forward to illumine the pathway of a philanthropic soul. "Mr. Rutger Steendam? I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir. Thank you. Yes, I will be seated."

The poet stood erect, staring at his self-assured visitor. Presently the philanthropic smile again congealed to words.

"Mr. Steendam, permit me to say, sir, that I am delighted to find you at home." The portly caller's benevolent eyes took in at a glance every detail of the bare room in which he had seated himself, after the manner of a citified Santa Claus prospecting for the holiday season.

The poet and the sempstress had been exchanging troubled glances. Their visitor's manner was disconcerting and inexplicable. Whether he came to confer a blessing or to serve a writ was problematical.

"Mr. Rutger Steendam," resumed their caller at once, "you, sir, are a poet!"

The youth started nervously, turned red, and gasped,—

"Yes?"

"Yes, sir. Permit me to emphasize my assertion, sir. You are a poet, Mr. Steendam!"

The young man glanced at his sister, and then eyed the speaker questioningly.

"And you, sir?" he managed to murmur.

"I?" exclaimed the caller, smiling more expansively than ever. "I, sir, also am a poet—a brother poet, sir. But, more than that, Mr. Steendam, I come to you as the representative of the *Monthly Gazette*."

"Oh Rutger!" cried Margaret, dropping the work she had resumed upon the entrance of the mysterious intruder.

Steendam glanced at his shabby shoes, and again his thin cheeks flushed hotly.

IV.

"I THINK I may say, without fear of contradiction, Mr. Steendam, that poets are rare. Rhymesters, sir, versifiers, tinkling cymbals, these, I grant you, are as thick as the leaves in the Etrurian shades of Vallombrosa. The poet, Mr. Steendam, is the product of neither a fashion nor a fad. His genius, sir, is a birth-mark, not a badge. You are a poet, Mr. Steendam. You have struck a new note in a generation that is too prone to glorify mere echoes."

The benevolent countenance of Percival Tubbs, associate editor of the *Monthly Gazette*, resembled at that moment the refulgent face of a naturalist who has just succeeded in putting salt upon the tail of a *rara avis*.

Rutger Steendam had seated himself beside his sister, staring at his caller in speechless wonderment. His most fantastic dreams had never pictured a philanthropic editor seated beside a cold hearthstone and dispensing radiant smiles and pearls of critical wisdom to a poet out of a job and an overworked sempstress. The youth had had sufficient experience as an unrecognized author to realize that it was not the custom of magazine editors to go a-hunting for unknown poets among the unlettered inhabitants of an East Side flat-house.

But there was nothing in the manner and outward seeming of Percival Tubbs to suggest that he had observed and comprehended the amazement of the Steendams. He spoke with the self-assurance of one whose words and actions are to be accepted without question, whose

seeming eccentricity will justify itself if it is not obliged to confront a mirror.

"When I received your manuscript, Mr. Steendam," went on Percival Tubbs, addressing the poet, the while he eyed the sempstress, who, with downcast gaze, was striving to resume her urgent stitching, "when I received your manuscript, sir, I groaned. I always groan when a large consignment of verse reaches me from an unknown source. You may not believe it, Mr. Steendam, but I have a tender heart, a sympathetic, imaginative temperament that renders the rejection of a manuscript a melancholy, unwelcome task. An unavailable story or poem, sir, is a tragedy in miniature. All misdirected energy vindicates Heraclitus. Should I give way to my inclinations, Mr. Steendam, my office would be flooded daily with my tears. We are looked upon, we editors, as unimpressionable, cold-blooded, nay, cruel autocrats, indifferent to real genius, blind to our own interests, and bowing to no authority save that of precedent. I received a letter a few days ago from a rejected contributor who complained that his manuscript had been returned to him merely because his name was unknown to the public. His verses had been found lacking in ideas, in form; in short, sir, they were hopeless. But his Parthian arrow had tapped my tears, and I wept silently behind my desk. The gnashing of teeth, sir, that goes on just outside the office of a magazine is a constant source of misery to a sensitive soul."

Percival Tubbs had said all this with an all-pervading smile upon his cheerful countenance that testified to his strength of will. In spite of the sad duties forced upon him by his profession, he had maintained, apparently, a sunny, optimistic disposition and perfect health. As a target for ambitious writers he had escaped serious defacement. The tears that he had shed had served as salt-water baths to reinvigorate his middle-aged vitality.

"You say you—you liked my poems, sir?" faltered Rutger Steendam, nervously shifting his slim legs, and glancing with renewed interest at his disordered desk. He had forgotten that but a few minutes back he had been setting out to confront an unappreciative world as a Miscellaneous Male.

"I groaned, Mr. Steendam, but I read 'em," went on Percival Tubbs, dwelling with self-satisfaction upon his heroic devotion to duty. "I read, and read, and still my wonder grew. I must confess, Mr. Steendam, that I was shocked."

"Shocked?" exclaimed the poet.

"Shocked, sir, as I recalled my brutal reception of your manuscript. 'Here,' said I to myself, 'is one of the elect. Here is one who both sees and sings; here is realism set to music; Truth, simply garbed, melting the soul at sight.'"

The editor paused for breath, and Rutger Steendam eyed him keenly. A momentary suspicion had teased him with the thought that Percival Tubbs had become a more or less harmless lunatic through constant contact with unavailable manuscripts. The possibility suggested itself to the poet that the editor had broken loose from his office to wreak an odd, playful vengeance upon many annoying contributors by poking sugar-coated fun at a foolish youth in an East-Side flat. But Steendam's doubts of his guest's good faith were instantly dispelled. His own egotism and the reassuring personality of Percival Tubbs had formed an alliance against which shadowy suspicions could not prevail. Eccentric his visitor might be, but he was neither malicious nor mad. It was not impossible that he, Rutger Steendam, had written poems possessed of sufficient originality and power to drive an editor from the grooves of habit; to force the Blue Pencil to do homage to the Pad of Genius. Surely, Percival Tubbs would not have made his way to Stanton Street had he not been convinced that he was following the trail of a real lion whose roar the public would rejoice to hear.

"You see, Miss Steendam," the genial editor went on to say, forcing the girl's brown eyes to meet his gaze, "your brother has taken splendid advantage of his environment. An artist living in this neighborhood would not paint still life. He would give us pictures of men, women, and children in forceful contrasts, against backgrounds light or dark, but eternally significant. You follow me? Your brother has pursued this method in his poems. I will go so far as to say, Steendam, that you are the Kipling of the East Side. This, sir, is the highest praise that a critic could accord to you."

"It is, indeed," murmured Steendam, his voice knocking like a stranger against his tympanum.

"Now, you may think it peculiar, Mr. Steendam," continued Tubbs, smiling at Margaret, who glanced up at him shyly now and again, "you may think it peculiar on the part of a magazine editor to seek you out in this unprofessional way, to bull the market in a commodity that he contemplates purchasing. But the success of the *Monthly Gazette*, sir, is due to the fact that we have dared to be original, even iconoclastic, in our methods, pursuing a novel course in every department of the magazine. I have been waiting for you for a year, Mr. Steendam. I believed in your existence; felt you in the air, so to speak. 'There will arise a man,' I said, 'whose genius, combining both a camera and a music-box, will tower above the pygmy versifiers of the New World's metropolis, taking his place at once as New York's age-end poet.' While I wept over rhymes that have made me prematurely old, I constantly prayed that I might discover a song penned by a master ignorant of his power and unknown to fame. My col-

leagues in the office have laughed at me for my seemingly hopeless quest. 'Any clues to-day, Tubbs?' they would ask me, glancing at the piles of manuscript upon my desk. 'Percival's Phantom Poet,' one of them dubbed the reward I vainly sought to win for my faith and perseverance. 'I've found him,' I announced to the office yesterday, waving your manuscript, Steendam, before the mocking, unbelieving eyes of my associates. "'Percival's Phantom Poet' is a reality—and a realist. To-morrow morning, gentlemen, I shall set out to make the acquaintance of my long-awaited genius. Not until you have all done homage to his greatness shall I permit him to enter these rooms, whose walls still echo with your scoffs and jeers.' They smiled in derision, Steendam, but they said no more."

Percival Tubbs, his cheeks flushed from the varied emotions that his narrative had recalled, gazed earnestly at the poet, upon whose success his own reputation as a critic depended. Steendam's clear-cut, mobile face was radiant with joy. His gaze wandered from the editor's glowing countenance to his sister's smiling lips and eyes, and then back again. Many questions forced themselves towards his tongue, but their very urgency defeated itself, and the youth remained speechless, awaiting the further pleasure of Percival Tubbs. The latter soon broke the silence again.

"You look the part, Steendam. Frankly, sir, I was anxious 'to size you up,' as the slang phrase goes, before I placed you on exhibition, or even permitted you to enter the *Gazette's* office. 'Rutger Steendam,' I repeated to myself, after I had read your poems. 'Early Dutch!' New Amsterdam's first poet was one Jacob Steendam, forgotten long ago. This may be, I reflected, a family reincarnation, the spirit of Steendam the Has-Been vivifying the body of Steendam Who-Is-To-Be. And so I came to Stanton Street. I may say, sir, without flattery, that you fulfil my highest expectations. You'll do, Steendam! You're not as beautiful as Byron nor as picturesque as Poe, but you'll pose to perfection as a realistic poet of antique Dutch stock. Have you a recent photograph, Steendam? No, I suppose not. Well, I'm going to pay you in cash for one hundred and eighty lines of verse, at fifty cents a line."

"Oh Mr. Tubbs!" exclaimed Margaret, dropping her work. Her brother's mouth fell open with amazement.

"Now, Steendam," said the editor, arising to take his departure, "I want you to put yourself in my hands for a time. I've made up my mind to conduct you at once to the high-road to success. You'll be forced to face the danger of being spoiled, but I leave it to your sister's common sense to save you from the perils to which you will be exposed. Here's my card, sir, containing my house-address. Come to me at nine to-night. I'm going to show you something of the social

side of New York's literary life. We'll look in at the monthly meeting of the Writers' Club, and, later on, we'll run over to Mrs. Caxton's reception."

"But, Mr. Tubbs," began the poet, blushing, and glancing down at his shapeless trousers and overworked shoes.

"I understand you, sir," remarked the editor smilingly. "Here, Steendam, are ninety dollars. Just sign this receipt at your desk, will you? The day is young yet. You know something of the world, young man; I can see that. And now, good-by. Remember, my boy, nine o'clock, sharp! Miss Steendam, my respects."

A moment later Percival Tubbs was wending his way westward across Stanton Street. Glancing at his watch, he muttered to himself:

"A great find! He'll make a sensation, and, best of all, he's the real thing. And now for William Farquhar Barton! It's strange that nobody knew of his coming until he reached here. If I could persuade him to give the *Gazette* a serial, Barton and Steendam together would place the magazine on the very first bench of the realistic school. I'll take a hansom and drive to the Waldorf at once."

Meanwhile Rutger Steendam was gazing down at a roll of bills in his hand, while his sister, leaning against his shoulder, alternately laughed and wept, catching her breath now and then to exclaim:

"Oh Rutger! I knew you were a poet. I knew it! I knew it, Rutger!"

"Well, Margaret, perhaps you did. But I never felt sure of it before," remarked Steendam, his eyes still glued to the first money that the niggardly Muse had ever vouchsafed to him. "I suppose he meant, Margaret, that I was to replenish my wardrobe at once. I can hire a dress-suit for to-night, don't you think?"

Thereupon the Steendams seated themselves, to plan, with as much calmness as they could command, the details of the poet's forthcoming career of glory in the high lights of the uptown world.

V.

"WHEN, Mrs. Barton, did you—ah—first give way to this?"

William F. Barton, with his hands clasped behind his back, was striding to and fro in the room at the Hotel Waldorf in which we first gazed upon his uninspired but wholesome countenance. Professor Trotter had sailed away an hour ago, leaving trouble and mischief in his wake. Mrs. Barton, pale and limp, reclined in an easy-chair, alternately wiping her tear-stained eyes with a handkerchief and casting furtive, frightened glances at the flushed face of her husband. Twice her lips twitched as she endeavored to answer Mr. Barton's question, but the confession that she had just made to him had para-

lyzed her power of speech. She remained silent, checking her sobs as best she could.

"I asked you—ah—Mrs. Barton, when you—ah—first succumbed to this amazing weakness?" repeated the Englishman, planting himself in front of his wife and frowning down upon her pitilessly.

"Don't be—be angry with me, William," pleaded the little woman, while a sad, beseeching smile crept into her pale face. "It's not—not—a long one, William."

"Nor deep, nor broad, I'll warrant," commented Barton gruffly. "You tell me, Elizabeth, that you—ah—had the thing typewritten. What did you do with it then?"

Mrs. Barton gasped, and clutched her handkerchief nervously.

"I sent it, William, to a London publisher."

"And the London publisher—ah—sent it back, of course?"

"Yes, William. But—but—a letter—a very kind letter—came with it, saying, oh William, that it showed 'great promise.'"

A smile that his wife could not interpret played for an instant around Barton's firm mouth. Seating himself in a chair, the Englishman crossed his legs and remained silent for a time, gazing musingly at Mrs. Barton's apprehensive face.

"You see, Elizabeth, I—ah—don't know the symptoms. If I had been wiser, more watchful, I might have saved you before you had gone too far. It is only fair for me to acknowledge that I am not altogether blameless in this matter."

"But, William," exclaimed Mrs. Barton, a touch of red showing upon her thin cheeks, "you speak as though I had contracted some awful disease—or had—had committed a terrible crime. It's very short, William, and I'm sure that it is very—very true."

"It's not its length, Mrs. Barton, nor—ah—its—ah—veracity, so to speak, to which I object. It's the whole blooming business, you understand. Here am I mistaken by a penny-a-liner and a lecture man for a depraved novelist, and, as if that were not enough for one day, I am confronted, Mrs. Barton, by—ah—the evidence that my own wife has been surreptitiously writing rubbish."

A sob escaped the restraint imposed upon it by Mrs. Barton's handkerchief. But the woman's spirit was not broken. Pulling herself together, she sat erect, and said coldly,—

"Everything, to your mind, Mr. Barton, is rubbish that cannot be turned at once into pounds, shillings, and pence."

A gleam of mingled amazement and admiration came into the Englishman's eyes. Here was something new, Elizabeth daring to defy William! Barton caught his breath and imagined for a moment that he was taking his tub. Could it be, he asked himself, that his attitude towards the matter in hand showed evidence of a narrowness

of view? Was it true that his commercial habit of mind had forced him to do his wife a grave injustice? Domineering by temperament and habit, it required an heroic effort of will upon Barton's part to contemplate, even for a moment, the possibility that Mrs. Barton might possess much weighty matter to urge in her own behalf.

"Can you not see, William, how unreasonable you are?" continued Mrs. Barton, marvelling at her own audacity and at her husband's unwonted hesitancy. "You have used the word 'rubbish' twice this morning, once to designate the novels of William Farquhar Barton and again to describe my own modest effort as an author. This you have done, William, without reading a line of the books that you consign to the dust-heap. Barton's novels are 'rubbish,' but for each one of them he receives a small fortune. My story is 'rubbish' because it was rejected by a publisher. Is all fiction 'rubbish,' William?"

"You must pardon me, Mrs. Barton, if I remark that I am not upon the—ah—witness-stand," answered the Englishman, smiling grimly. "The point at issue is not what I think of—ah—fiction, but how, Mrs. Barton, I can manage to escape its toils."

There was silence for a time. Mrs. Barton, exhausted by her valiant self-defence, leaned back in her chair, concentrating her energies upon the effort to suppress all outward signs of emotion. Presently her husband spoke again.

"I had anticipated the—ah—pleasure this morning of taking a look at this very interesting and, I may say, energetic city. But frankly, Elizabeth, I hardly dare to take the risk. What might happen to me in—ah—a literary way, if I should emerge from this not impregnable retreat, I dread to think. Have you got it with you, Elizabeth?"

Mrs. Barton sat erect, looking dazed.

"I don't follow you, Mr. Barton," she remarked apologetically.

"I mean your—ah—story, or—ah—novel, Elizabeth," exclaimed the Englishman, while his cheeks flushed slightly. Mrs. Barton eyed her husband sharply. His question mystified her.

"It's very short, William," she remarked irrelevantly.

"You misunderstand me, Elizabeth," said Barton patiently. "I was not seeking information as to its dimensions. Its locality was what I was endeavoring to learn."

"The scene is laid in Birmingham, William," murmured Mrs. Barton nervously.

"And the—ah—typewritten copy of the—ah—it?" asked Mr. Barton sternly.

"It's—it's—with my luggage, William," answered the authoress feebly.

The Englishman arose, cast his hands behind him, and resumed his pacing of the spacious room. Mrs. Barton's eyes were half closed,

but now and then she would scan her husband's immobile countenance questioningly, as a culprit who, having pleaded guilty, hopes for a merciful sentence from the court.

To the Bartons, thus confronting a crisis precipitated by a newspaper's reckless disregard of truth, came Nemesis in livery, bearing a tray upon which rested an envelope and several calling cards.

Barton, glancing at the phlegmatic attendant angrily, seized the pasteboard fragments held out to him and read aloud names that seemed to stare him in the face with calm defiance:

"'Algernon Mason—*The Evening Star*,' 'Charles T. Philbrick—*The Morning Trumpet*,' 'Miss Muffett—*The Evening Gossip*.' Who are these—ah—people, James?"

"I think, sir," answered Nemesis, "that they are reporters—news-paper people, sir."

"Tell them, James, that I've returned to England. Tell them that I'm—ah—dead. Tell them——"

"Oh William!" moaned Mrs. Barton.

"There's a note, sir," remarked Nemesis inexorably. Barton reluctantly clutched the envelope as the attendant retired, to carry to the early birds of the press the news that the worm had turned.

"Oh William, why are you so—so——" murmured Mrs. Barton.

"So—ah—what, Elizabeth?" asked Barton, confronting his wife with the face and port of one whose self-control is at its lowest ebb.

"Those reporters, William! They will think you very rude." Mrs. Barton had striven to speak soothingly.

"Think me very rude, Elizabeth!" exclaimed Barton, resuming his restless march. "What right have they, Mrs. Barton, to think of me at all? It is an outrage, madam. The time has come, Mrs. Barton, to put an end to this—ah—farce. I have it! I have it! I'll ring and call these people up at once. I'll tell 'em the—ah—truth, Mrs. Barton. It's the only thing to do. I dread the publicity of the explanation. There'll be a great laugh at my expense. But I can stand that, Mrs. Barton. Anything is better than to be kept a prisoner in this room, suffering vicarious punishment because another man has written—ah—trashy novels."

Mrs. Barton's eyes followed her husband's movements wearily. She seemed to lack the vitality for any further protest.

"The note, William?" she murmured, as Barton presently recrossed the room and again stood gazing down into her pale face.

"Ah, yes! the note, Mrs. Barton," he exclaimed, opening the envelope that had lurked, crumpled and forgotten, in his grasp.

"My dear Barton," ran the epistle, "I had planned to rejoin you at four o'clock, but my engagements deny me that pleasure. I have, however, taken a box for to-night at the

Century Theatre. The great London hit, 'The Impostor,' has made a sensation here. You've seen the play on the other side, doubtless, but an American cast may amuse you. If you and Mrs. Barton will consent to be my guests for the evening, I will send a carriage for you at eight. I've promised to look in at Mrs. Archibald Caxton's with you after the theatre. Mrs. Caxton, as you know, is the one woman in New York at whose house blood and brains meet upon an equality. You'll find there, my dear Barton, the leader of the inner circle and the latest thing in poets vainly endeavoring to admire one another. In other words, the Blue Book and the Scroll of Fame come together in the Caxton press. Don't talk too freely to the reporters, old man, until I can find time to give you a few hints. Au revoir, then, and my compliments to Mrs. Barton.

"Yours in haste,

"TROTTER."

Barton's reading of the above had been one long, strident gasp. Mrs. Barton, erect, stiff, and motionless, had imbibed Trotter's words as one who is sore athirst. The theatre! A reception! What delights they promised to an imaginative mind weary of the humdrum life that an unsociable man of business had forced his helpless wife to lead!

Just as Barton had concluded his asthmatic rendition of Trotter's sprightly prose, Nemesis in plush again invaded the apartment.

"You rang, sir?" asked James, an icicle deigning to serve for a moment as an interrogation-point.

"Yes, James," Barton made shift to answer. "Those—ah—reporters?"

"They went away at once, sir," answered James, a gleam of almost human intelligence showing for an instant in his face.

Barton sank despondently into a chair. "You may go," he said wearily, waving the man away.

Into Mrs. Barton's cheek had crept a tinge of color, and her large eyes had grown bright with hope renewed.

"William," she began, and then checked her tongue. The expression upon her husband's face had convinced her that, at this stage of the game, silence was her long suit.

VI.

THE rooms of the Writers' Club were lighted by electric bulbs and flashes of wit. Once a month Genius invited Nonentity to spend an evening with him, to the end that the constant strain upon the host's mental machinery might be relaxed for a few festive hours while he condescended to entertain his uninspired guest. By the method thus pursued mutual benefits were interchanged. Genius made a study of Nonentity for future professional use, while Nonentity rejoiced to

think that a man is known by the company he keeps. The mission of the Writers' Club is to unroll a carpet monthly upon which the creative and the uncreative may cross their legs as equals, and, beneath a cloud of tobacco-smoke, chat of books and those who beget them. The guest speaks of the volumes that he has read, the host of those that he has written or intends to write. Beside the Genius and the Nonentity sits the Publisher, listening. The trio forms a group from which a sculptor might derive inspiration for a marble carved to represent the World of Letters. The author, his reader, and the capitalist, smiling at one another as they puff their cigars, are a sight that makes an evening at the Writers' Club a harbinger of the millennium.

To-night the rooms are well filled, for the literary undercurrents of America's publishing centre have begun their autumnal activity. After many an eccentric shift, the New World's area of high pressure in letters has found a permanent abiding-place in New York. It is well for a nation that its commercial metropolis should serve also as its centre of art and literature. The author and the man of business, the artist and the millionaire, have need of one another. They should hobnob socially now and then. After a time their friendly intercourse benefits whatever is genuine in the artistic striving of a great city, the while it broadens the views and sympathies of its men of affairs. That the poseur and the Philistine take advantage of this to satisfy their egotistic cravings does not detract from the truth of our general proposition.

Jenkins, the novelist, had come early to the club, and at nine o'clock found himself, much to his contentment, the centre of a group large enough to satisfy his vanity without jeopardizing his control of the conversation.

"I repeat it, gentlemen; Romance, as we understand it, is dead. What you mistake for its revival is simply the gruesome skirt-dance of an uneasy ghost." Jenkins stroked his black-and-white beard and gazed at his auditors defiantly.

"There sits Realism with a chip on his shoulder," remarked a tall, slender youth in evening dress, smiling at Jenkins from the edge of the circle. "What is Romance as you understand it, Sir Oracle?"

The novelist threw back his tousled head, while his nostrils quivered, and his black eyes flashed as they met the gaze of his flippant inquisitor.

"Romance, sir, is Falsehood making lightning-changes in antique garments to dazzle the eyes of youth. Romance is an old hag in paint and furbelows, walking the streets by moonlight and prating of the triumphs she used to win. Romance, my dear Edgerton, is to literature what alchemy and astrology are to science,—dead, sir, dead; but, alas, not yet buried!"

"That would seem to settle the matter," commented Edgerton, a slight drawl in his tones. "But I must acknowledge, Jenkins, that I still find a sneaking, reactionary, but very acute pleasure in the perusal of—" Here the speaker paused to light a cigarette.

"So do I," muttered an elderly, white-haired, and red-cheeked member of the group.

Jenkins, again stroking his beard, scanned the earnest faces surrounding him. "I will go so far as to admit that genius—" he began.

"What is genius?" asked a mischievous broth of an author, a broad grin framed in red hair.

"Genius," answered a cheerful voice at his elbow,—"genius consists in an infinite capacity for taking—stimulants."

"You're in the running then, old man," drawled Edgerton, clinking glasses with the last speaker.

"I was about to say," put in Jenkins testily, "that genius is genius—in whichever school it seeks self-expression. But the truly inspired souls of to-day are delivering their messages to mankind not in Romance's outworn tongue, but in the language of Realism, whose vocabulary was made for a higher mission than the telling of picturesque lies."

"Alas for Shakespeare, Cervantes, Scott, Hugo, and the other picturesque liars!" murmured the white-haired, red-cheeked man.

"And hurrah for Zola—and Jenkins!" cried the mischievous grin with red hair.

"Move to amend that," put in the lover of stimulants. "Add Farquhar Barton."

"Barton, of course," exclaimed several voices. "You know he's here?"

"Who's here?" cried Jenkins excitedly.

"Can it be, Jenkins, that Realism ignores the newspapers?" asked Edgerton softly.

"I've been hard at work," grumbled Jenkins. "Will nobody answer my question?"

"William Farquhar Barton, the Flaubert of Birmingham, is at the Waldorf, Jenkins," said a smooth-faced, phlegmatic-looking man who had not yet spoken. "We—that is, the committee—asked him to accept our hospitality to-night. He sent us a flippant answer, much to our amazement."

"Tell us all about it, Merton," urged the crowd.

"There's not much to tell," went on the committeeman. "I managed to get a quorum together early this morning, as soon as I learned that Barton was here. We decided to serve a dinner here at seven and notify as many of the members as possible, if Barton should consent

to come to us. I wired him, asking if he would accept a dinner. He answered at once, saying yes, and bidding us to keep the meal hot and send it to the Waldorf at an early hour."

A shout of laughter followed Merton's explanation.

"Served you right," growled Jenkins. "You must have known that Barton is a man who has always shunned publicity."

"He'll outgrow that," drawled Edgerton. "I heard this afternoon that Trotter has him in tow. They'll be at Mrs. Caxton's to-night. Who's going?"

Half-a-dozen voices announced the intention of their owners of giving countenance to Mrs. Caxton's midnight gathering.

"Have you read Barton's latest?" asked somebody.

"Of course," growled Jenkins.

"Strong!" exclaimed an echo on the outskirts.

"Marvellous grasp of detail!" cried another.

"He's a giant, gentlemen!" cried Jenkins, anxious to regain the prestige his ignorance of Barton's arrival had cost him. "William Farquhar Barton is in touch with his generation. He comprehends the whole duty of a Realist."

"What is the whole duty of a Realist?" asked the lover of stimulants.

"To do unto others as he wouldn't want another fellow to do unto him," murmured Edgerton.

"Don't talk nonsense," growled Jenkins, his beard a-bristle. "Barton is a credit to English literature. He never wrote a page that does not display the nicest kind of preparation for his work. He sees the life of to-day as it is, and he shows it to us not as it might be, or ought to be, or will be, but simply as it exists within his range of vision. Take any of his works—'What Mr. Periwinkle Thought of Himself,' 'A Bachelor's Diary,' 'Men, Women, and Murder,' 'A Spinster's Soul,' and what do you find, gentlemen? Truth reduced to its last equation; To-day photographed by To-day; England naked before the world; the social history of our own times immortalized by Art. What is Barton? Incarnate Genius endowed with a microscopic vision and a telescopic range, who has possessed his own generation and placed a mortgage upon posterity."

"Fill Jenkins's glass, somebody," suggested the lover of stimulants. "He's overworking himself."

"I had a letter from a London man not long ago," remarked an author's guest, "saying that Barton was about to start out for the Orient to gather data for his great trilogy."

"He changed his mind—and *such* a mind!" murmured Edgerton maliciously.

"What do you mean to imply, young man?" asked Jenkins, glower-

ing at the last speaker. "Don't you acknowledge Barton's supremacy? Don't you admit, sir, that Realism is triumphant?"

"The great objection to Realism, so-called——" began Edgerton.

"Oyez! Oyez!" cried the lover of stimulants, a lawyer by profession. "What is the great objection to Realism, so-called?"

"I was about to remark," continued Edgerton patiently, "that Realism, in its heart of hearts, is scientific rather than artistic. The mission of Science is the demonstration of Truth. The aim of Art is to beget Beauty. Truth and Beauty are not always one. Should Fiction serve as a hand-maid to Science, or remain true to her origin as the characteristic, modern Art-form? In other words, what should the great novelist strive to accomplish?"

Jenkins, erect and eager, awaited his opportunity.

"Truth and Beauty are not always one, you say. It is the aim of the great novelist to give them unity, my friend. Let me illustrate the point by Barton's writings. He is a master of the novel as a work of art. Examine the construction of any one of his stories. You will find that he has conceived the whole with the soul of an artist and put it together with the skill and patience requisite to the perfect presentation of his original inspiration. We instantly recognize the truth of his achievement, and in the nice adjustment of its parts we find its beauty. It may be that his novel depresses our spirits, inclines us towards pessimism, but why should we therefore deny his rank as an artist? Have you seen, Edgerton, 'A Hero of Santiago,' Benton's latest statue? The sculptor has chipped the superfluous stone from a block of marble to show us the figure of a soldier writhing in the agony of death. At first glance two impressions come to us with equal force. We marvel at the sculptor's grasp of detail, while we shudder at the grim horror he has revealed to us. Is Benton a hand-maid to Science? Because his statue satisfies the anatomist and the military expert, and, at the same time, saddens our hearts, is it any the less a work of art?"

"There you are, my boy!" cried the lover of stimulants. "Is it—oh, is it—any the less a work of art?"

"Ah, there comes Tubbs," put in somebody before Edgerton could make reply.

"Tubbs looks radiant. Who's that with him?"

"Maybe Barton," suggested the grin with red hair.

"Nonsense. Barton's fifty, if he is a day," growled Jenkins.

"Well, you may rest assured of this," drawled Edgerton. "Whoever is with Tubbs is somebody."

"Yes," murmured the lawyer, "in *esse* or in *posse*."

"Come to my rescue, Tubbs," cried Jenkins across the room.

"There are a few Romantic guerillas over here who must be destroyed."

With a hand resting upon Rutger Steendam's arm, Percival Tubbs pushed through the throng towards the group surrounding the champion of Realism.

"I want you to know Jenkins," whispered the editor to the poet. "He can be of great service to us later on."

A tinge of red crept into young Steendam's cheeks. Somehow, Tubbs had made his guest feel that they were about to engage in some kind of a conspiracy.

VII.

"THE thing's—ah—preposterous, Elizabeth! Preposterous!"

"I know it, William. But you must admit that I did not suggest our going to-night."

It was five o'clock in the afternoon. Barton sat gazing thoughtfully at his wife's animated face. Mrs. Barton, reclining in an easy-chair, held in her lap a small pile of type-written paper.

"No, Elizabeth," admitted Barton, "you did not suggest it. Perhaps we might attribute it to—ah—spontaneous combustion!"

Mrs. Barton laughed aloud. She had been growing younger during the day.

"And you don't think it's—it's rubbish, William?" she asked, glancing down at the copy of her novel, upon which one hand rested caressingly.

"Hardly, Elizabeth. In fact, I may say it's not half bad. You've hit off that old curmudgeon, MacGregor, to the life. Your grasp of business details, Elizabeth, is—ah—really remarkable."

In Barton's eyes shone a gleam of admiration as he drew his chair towards his wife and looked down into her flushed face, upon which played a smile that had in it something of triumph. It had required considerable moral courage for this misunderstood woman to read her realistic novelette to her husband at this crisis. To force him to listen to her story had demanded from her the nicest diplomacy. Had she failed to win his attention at the outset, her experiment would have been a dire failure. As it was, however, she had achieved a more sweeping victory than she had dared to crave. She had drawn a word-picture of life as it was known to William F. Barton with sufficient skill not alone to hold his interest from the beginning, but to arouse his curiosity in her plot, while she appealed to his sense of both humor and pathos in her character touches.

"But really, William, it would only last one evening, don't you know. It would be the night of my life, William. I have longed for years to see a lot of real literary people on parade. It's not quite as if we had purposely attempted to deceive the public. You tried to explain to Professor Trotter. You'll tell him the whole story to-night.

He'll laugh, and take us to Mrs. Caxton's for our own sake, William. I'm sure he will."

"But, Elizabeth, it strikes me somehow like indecent exposure of—ah—mistaken identity. To put it very mildly, my dear, the whole thing would be undignified. Trotter'll have every reason to call us adventurers. He is—ah—peppery. When am I to tell him that it's all a misunderstanding? At the—ah—theatre? He might make a scene, Elizabeth."

All the horror felt by the conservative Englishman for "a scene" found expression in Barton's tones.

"Of course, William, you'll be obliged to make it all clear to Professor Trotter before we go to the reception. I'm not quite sure that he will be pleased. But, really, William, he looked to me like a man who would carry off any situation."

Barton arose and resumed his favorite line of march up and down the room.

"But I mustn't permit him to carry off—ah—my reputation, Elizabeth. I begin to suspect that you and Trotter and those newspaper people are attempting to hypnotize me. Look at me, Mrs. Barton, and reflect upon my—ah—present state of mind. Here am I, a quiet, reputable, elderly Englishman, never suspected of the slightest tendency towards eccentricity, actually contemplating a madcap prank, nothing less than the embezzlement, madam, for an entire evening, of—ah—another man's personality. And such a personality, Mrs. Barton! I am accused of being a writer of sensational novels, I, William F. Barton, whose name has never before been associated with anything even remotely disreputable. And you ask me, Elizabeth, to destroy, deliberately and with my own hand, my—ah—alibi. What amazes me, madam, is that I should, even for a moment, contemplate the possibility of submitting myself to this degradation."

"I can't help thinking, William," remarked Mrs. Barton quietly, "that you exaggerate the unpleasant possibilities of the situation. If Professor Trotter had called again, instead of writing a note to us, the blunder might have been explained. But we must not treat him with rudeness, William, and I feel sure that he will appreciate the humorous features of the mistake that has been made. Furthermore, my dear, as you have not sent him an answer to his invitation, he must take it for granted that we will meet him at the theatre."

Trotter's epistle lay open upon a table at that moment within reach of Barton's hand. The agitated Englishman grasped the note and re-read it hurriedly.

"It is evident, Elizabeth, that the man is extremely domineering by habit. 'Facie ad Faciam.' What is the—ah—meaning of that, Mrs. Barton?"

"Face to face," murmured the authoress pedantically.

"Means, I suppose, that you're not to send a reply to His Majesty's commands," growled Barton, resuming his measured tread. "Face to face, indeed! That's all very well for Trotter. He does all the talking."

Presently Mrs. Barton, stealing an anxious glance at her husband's disturbed countenance, said softly:

"I really am very anxious to meet Professor Trotter again, William. Don't you think his advice would be of much service to me, my dear?"

"His advice, Elizabeth?" exclaimed Barton, standing still to confront his wife. "His advice about what?"

"Do you think, William—or don't you think? What I mean is—You know, William, you said you liked it."

"You will do me a service, Mrs. Barton, if you will condescend to collect yourself. It is sufficiently difficult for me to follow my own thoughts, madam, without—ah—chasing your ideas all over the room."

"Forgive me, William," implored Mrs. Barton penitently. "I will endeavor to be more business-like."

"Humph," muttered her husband suspiciously.

"I intended to say, William, that Professor Trotter,—knowing all the publishers, don't you see? That is, he might, if he were not too busy, or——"

"Or too talkative," growled Barton. "Go on, my dear. You grow more lucid every moment."

"What I mean, William, is this; as you don't consider my story rubbish, I might, after asking Professor Trotter for a few suggestions, offer it to one of the New York publishers. But not, my dear, if you object. You know you said, William, that it was not half bad."

Barton threw himself into a chair and rested his aching head against its back while he eyed his wife sternly.

"You must not, Mrs. Barton, make a mistake regarding my attitude towards your—ah—story, or novel. As a practical man, madam, I have always endeavored to be perfectly just towards people with whom I have had dealings. This matter is out of my line, of course, but I think I may trust my judgment, Mrs. Barton, to do the fair thing by you under the peculiar circumstances prevailing at the—ah—moment. I will acknowledge that you have written an interesting tale presenting a very accurate picture of various phases of life, concerning the truth of which I am a competent judge. You have drawn that old curmudgeon, MacGregor, to perfection, Elizabeth. But why should the public be told all about MacGregor? Why should the humorous and the pathetic features of my business be thrust upon the attention

of—ah—total strangers? Is there anything in reason, Mrs. Barton, to justify your exposure of matters to which, I will admit, I thought all women were blind? In other words, Elizabeth, is it fair to the unconscious people whose weaknesses you have probed to put 'em, full-length and easily identified, into—ah—a book?"

"But, William," argued Mrs. Barton, somewhat astonished at her husband's point of view, "my characters are merely types. If you found them real, it was because I have imbued them with universal, not local, traits."

"That may be true, Elizabeth," admitted Barton wearily, "but it's all a question of—ah—taste. There's something offensive to me, I must acknowledge, in the very features of your story, Elizabeth, that give it both strength and truth. If you had chosen the last century, or—ah—written a fairy tale, or even a poem, I might look at the whole matter from another stand-point. But, Elizabeth, I could never consent to the—ah—publication of the story you hold in your lap. You married the wrong Barton, madam. The novelist—what's his name? William Farquhar?—would have said to you—in—ah—my place——"

"Oh William," sobbed Mrs. Barton, "you are cruel. What *have* I done, that you should treat me so—so—so——"

Barton was sitting erect, gazing at his wife with mingled amazement and self-reproach. He had had no wish to wound her.

"Forgive me, Elizabeth! You misunderstand me! I did not mean to be—ah——"

Nemesis in livery interrupted the overwrought man and wife at this juncture. Barton seized the delicately-scented note, held out to him by the phlegmatic James, as a drowning man might snatch at a life-preserver.

"Listen to this, Elizabeth," he exclaimed, anxious to dry her tears vicariously. "Mrs. Caxton has just learned from Professor Trotter that you and I have deigned to honor New York with our presence. She begs us to accept the assurance that she—ah—holds us in the highest esteem, and would consider it a favor if we would permit Professor Trotter to escort us to her hearth-stone after we leave the theatre this evening. James!"

"Yes, sir."

"Is there anyone—ah—waiting?"

"No, sir. No one, sir."

"James!"

"Yes, sir."

"You're to bring no more cards, notes, or telegrams to this room until further orders. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"You're to serve dinner here for two at six-thirty."

"Yes, sir."

"And—ah—James, there'll be a brougham here for us at eight. Tell the—ah—"

"William!" cried Mrs. Barton apprehensively. Then she boldly faced Nemesis. "Tell the brougham to await our orders, James."

"Yes, ma'am. Is that all, sir?"

Barton, speechless from the impact of various emotions, remained silent, and James strutted noiselessly from the room.

VIII.

THERE is every reason to believe that the Czar of Russia's adoption of a radical peace policy was consummated one evening after dinner. Civilization may admit, some day, that it owes a great debt of gratitude to this altruistic Autocrat, but the future should not ignore its obligation to Cæsar's cook. Universal peace is a post-prandial conception. If charity begins at home, it is equally certain that philanthropy originates in the kitchen. The white-winged dove of peace hovers above the banquet-board, and ever opposed to the smoke of battle are the soft clouds begotten by after-dinner cigars.

After a day of varied agitations, William F. Barton sipped his demi-tasse of coffee and puffed a fragrant perfecto contentedly. That the novelty of his contrasted annoyances had led him to exaggerate their importance suggested itself to him as a possibility, the while his gaze rested approvingly upon Mrs. Barton, smiling at him across the table. In evening dress the Bartons were a credit to Birmingham. It seemed a pity to Mrs. Barton, as her eyes rejoiced in the black-and-white perfection of Mr. Barton's attire, that her distinguished-looking husband had always shunned society.

If Barton's aversion to fashion's varied functions had been the outcome of a fondness for his wife's exclusive companionship, this account of his strange tribulations would never have taken its place among the literary annals of New York. Wholly absorbed in his business affairs, Barton had long lost all intellectual sympathy with his wife. Had he learned through Mrs. Barton's inclinations more about existing conditions in the realm of letters, the day's revelation of her authorship would have been unnecessary and his present repentant, conciliatory, self-sacrificing mood would not have crept upon him to lure him towards an irrevocable step.

It requires a stony-hearted nature to withstand the wiles of an affectionate wife whose mind is fixed upon a set purpose. Mrs. Barton had won half the battle when she had persuaded her husband to don evening clothes before dining. An artistic repast had served to remove many obstacles to her plan of campaign, and, as the hour of eight drew

near, Mrs. Barton felt convinced that victory was about to perch upon the banner she had so boldly waved aloft.

In after days William F. Barton could not recall the petty occurrences that had found their place between the moment when he had been served with coffee at his table and the juncture at which he had been ushered into a box at the Century Theatre. He could remember that he had felt a longing to atone to his wife for some great injustice that had weighed, a shapeless, nameless load, upon his conscience. He could recollect a hasty decision to which he had come, a hurried donning of wraps, a rapid drive in a closed carriage, and then the lights and colors of a metropolitan auditorium before the curtain reveals the first set of the season's success. Mrs. Barton had carried herself like a judge of wines sampling a new brand of champagne.

"You know, William, this has made a tremendous sensation in London," remarked Mrs. Barton, scanning her programme, after she had glanced at the brilliant outlook from their box. Uptown, having dined well, had come forth in evening dress to seek amusement. The charm of novelty lay in the scene spread before the eager eyes of the Englishman and his wife, but they hesitated to admit, even to their inner selves, that the outward seeming of the audience marked a higher state of civilization than they had thought to find across the sea.

"Where's—ah—Trotter?" muttered Barton nervously.

"Don't agitate yourself, William," pleaded his wife gently. "He'll be here presently, I have no doubt."

At that moment the orchestra sought to drown conversation in an overture. Barton, seeking concealment in the rear of the box, sat glowering at the back of his wife's curly head. He had begun to repent of the sacrifice that he had made upon the altar of his wife's desires. He felt like a man in a tower besieged by a throng of impudent strangers, with his retreat cut off by Professor Trotter.

"Listen to me, Elizabeth," he said firmly, bending forward. "It strikes me that we have been treated—ah—discourteously. I think we would do well to return to the hotel at once."

Mrs. Barton turned to cast a reproachful glance at the flushed face of her captive spouse.

"Do you want to make yourself conspicuous, William?" she asked pointedly.

"That's what I'm trying to avoid—ah—Mrs. Barton," he answered grimly. "The only way for us to preserve an atom of self-respect—"

At this point the stage curtain was rent in twain, and the buzz from the house lost itself in an actor's voice. Barton felt a hand upon his shoulder, and, turning nervously, looked into the smiling, apologetic face of Professor Trotter.

"Barton, how are you?" whispered Trotter cordially. "Mrs. Bar-

ton, accept my thanks. I appreciate your generosity in overlooking my unconventionality. You must realize, Barton," he went on, regardless of the stage, "that the suddenness of your arrival has compelled me 'to hustle.' You understand the verb, do you not, Barton?"

The Englishman, erect and silent, with a touch-me-not rigidity of poise, frowned at the heroine of the play, who was engaged at that moment in flinging epigrams at the audience across the footlights.

"I see," murmured Trotter, stroking his beard. "This thing's in your own line, Barton. I'd forgotten that."

"What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed the Englishman, flushing hotly, as he faced his self-appointed manager.

"Pardon me, Barton," whispered Trotter in a conciliatory tone. "I didn't mean to imply that you have a rival, among novelists or playwrights, in the manufacture of giant fire-crackers. Still, there's a good deal of snap to 'The Impostor.' You'll admit that, Barton."

"Professor Trotter," began the Englishman pompously, "the time has come for me to inform you, sir, that you are laboring under—ah—a grave misapprehension. I am not, sir——"

"Not small, or envious, or jealous of touch-and-go playwrights, Barton," whispered Trotter good-naturedly. "I know that, old man. You misunderstood me. But this play's in your own school, you know. It's realistic, Barton, if it's anything. By the way," he continued, before Barton could again endeavor to turn the box into a confessional, "I heard a clever definition of Realism to-day. I don't subscribe, you understand, old man, to the indictment it makes. 'Realism,' said my friend Edgerton, 'is Truth crushed to earth, shouting witticisms from a mud-puddle.' But you mustn't mind Edgerton. You'll meet him at Mrs. Caxton's. He says equally sharp things about Romance, you know."

A theatre-party had just entered the box adjoining Trotter's.

"Really, William," murmured Mrs. Barton, turning to censure Trotter in her husband's name, "you must not talk any more. People are beginning to look at us."

"Keep quiet, will you?" growled Barton at his loquacious manager.

Trotter leaned back in his chair to think. He had led many lions through the crowded haunts of men, but he had never before held captive an animal whose temper seemed to be dangerous. Presently he bent forward to glance at the belated occupants of the box next to his own. A smile of satisfaction crept into his face as he saw that the late-comers were Mrs. Caxton and the two Misses Caxton and three young men, the latter prominent in New York's inner circle. A round of applause broke from the audience as the curtain fell, the lights gleamed again, and the orchestra reasserted itself.

"Mrs. Caxton! Delighted, I assure you," said Trotter, standing erect and leaning forward. "Permit me, madam. Mrs. Barton, Mrs. Caxton. Mr. Barton."

"This is, indeed, a pleasure," said Mrs. Caxton, a large, white-haired, gray-eyed woman, impressive in manner, breaking in upon Barton's consciousness like a bediamonded dowager-duchess sworn to his undoing. "I was overjoyed, Mrs. Barton—Mr. Barton,—to learn from Professor Trotter that there was a possibility of my numbering you among my guests this evening. You will come to me?"

"You are very kind," murmured Mrs. Barton faintly.

"I assure you, Mrs. Barton," went on Mrs. Caxton, addressing the wife while her gaze continually stole towards the face of the husband, "that you will meet with a warm reception in New York. Mr. Barton has so many admirers here. I've heard his praises sung all day. You have not visited the States before? No? You will find us, Mrs. Barton, in a state of social transition, as it were. We are slowly abandoning the worship of Mammon to pay our devotions to the Muses. In other words, cupidity has given place to culture. But there goes the bell. We must know each other well, Mrs. Barton, must we not?"

With a smile that dazzled Professor Trotter and his guests, Mrs. Caxton turned away.

"I must leave you during this act," whispered Trotter to his lion, raging internally at that moment. "I'll be back directly. This kind of thing, old man, is overloaded, you know, with details. Here, read this, if the play bores you. I clipped it from to-night's *Evening Moonbeam*. Don't let it bother you for a minute. It's Romance, Barton, not Realism."

The curtain had dropped, but Barton, helpless, hopeless, hot with impotent rebellion, found sufficient light to read the following irritating item, a Parthian arrow delivered by the unspeakable Trotter:

"Mrs. Caxton's reception this evening will tend to strengthen the impression that a salon upon the worthiest French model is in process of formation in this city. The *Moonbeam* learned this afternoon that Mrs. Caxton's guests are to be treated to a surprise destined to become the sensation of the season. Rumor has it that a world-famous English Realist is to read selections from an unpublished novel, and a report, that cannot be verified at this hour, asserts that the editor of a leading American magazine will introduce an unknown native poet to the attention of New York's world of culture."

Barton gasped and clutched the back of his wife's chair spasmodically. In his eyes shone the wild light of a slave to convention meditating the possibility of a reckless defiance of etiquette. How could he escape from the snare in which he was held without making a scene?

He was surrounded by the enemy. Flanked by Mrs. Caxton, he was threatened in the rear by Trotter. Mrs. Barton obstructed his exit by way of the stage.

"Well, I'm—ah—damned!" he muttered to himself, glaring meaninglessly at "The Impostor," whose gentlemanly rascalities at that moment held the audience spell-bound.

IX.

EXISTENCE had become a horror to an English capitalist in perfect health, in the prime of life, and separated from the worries of business by the breadth of the Atlantic. "'A man is punished only once for a crime, but many times for an error of judgment,'" cried "The Impostor" from the centre of the stage. Barton caught the words and groaned aloud.

"Aren't you feeling well, William?" whispered his wife, turning to gaze apprehensively into his face.

"How do *you* feel, Elizabeth?" returned Barton sarcastically. "Do you enjoy the—ah—situation?"

"It's certainly clever, William. They're working up to a splendid climax," answered Mrs. Barton softly, again facing the stage.

Barton was horrified to realize that at that moment he hated his wife. Her utter indifference to the frightful possibilities that their environment suggested amazed him. He was forced to the depressing conclusion that the slender, pale-faced, curly-haired little woman in front of him was morally irresponsible for the time being. Her absorption in that stupid play was proof positive that she was utterly indifferent to the awkward position in which her whims had placed her husband. "The Impostor" in front of her was a hero. The impostor behind her back could shift for himself!

Barton presently found his fevered fancy dwelling upon Trotter. Deep as was his detestation for the loquacious "hustler" who had forced him into a quicksand, the half-submerged victim realized that with Trotter rested his only hope of making a dignified escape from the peril that beset him. But what had become of Trotter? When would he return? Upon his reappearance Barton would grasp him by the arm and say curtly, "I am *not* a novelist." Circumlocution had been futile. Trotter's impetuosity must be checkmated. In unhesitating firmness at the instant of Trotter's return lay Barton's one chance of salvation. The Englishman quit scowling at the back of Mrs. Barton's head to watch the door at the rear of the box. The lion crouched in its den ready to spring upon its fated keeper. But the lion-tamer came not.

"Do you see anything of the—ah—Professor?" muttered Barton in his wife's ear as the curtain fell.

"No, William. You seem to be growing fond of him." Mrs. Barton smiled gayly.

"Yes, I am," growled her husband.

"What a fortunate contretemps!" exclaimed Mrs. Caxton, breaking in radiantly upon Barton's despair. "I have just received a pencilled scrawl from Professor Trotter, Mrs. Barton, saying that he has been forced to drive to the Writers' Club at once. Knowing that I had two vacant seats in my second carriage, he has asked me to see to it that you and Mr. Barton reach my home in comfort. I assure you that his request has given me the greatest delight."

Mrs. Caxton bent farther forward, to the end that the famous novelist might note the satisfaction that shone in her face. She discerned more animation upon Barton's countenance than his heavy features had yet displayed. The gleam in his eyes, she reflected, must be a spark from the fire of genius. In this Mrs. Caxton deceived herself.

"Madam—ah——" began the Englishman in a loud voice.

"You are very, very kind, Mrs. Caxton," exclaimed Mrs. Barton, a heroine for once in her colorless life. "Mr. Barton and I are deeply grateful for your courtesy."

"Won't Trotter be back again?" gasped Barton desperately.

"He'll meet you at my house, Mr. Barton," said the American dowager-duchess sweetly. "Did you notice," continued Mrs. Caxton, still scanning the Englishman's flushed face,—“did you notice a most daring plagiarism from your delightful ‘What Mr. Periwinkle Thought of Himself’ in one of ‘The Impostor’s’ best lines, Mr. Barton? ‘There are two interesting people in the world,’ he says, ‘a man with a future, and a woman with a past.’ You put the same idea into almost the same words, Mr. Barton.”

Mr. and Mrs. Barton sat speechless. "He is charmingly modest," thought Mrs. Caxton, "and his wife's a dear." With a friendly nod to the silent Englishman, Professor Trotter's deputy turned her back to the lion's cage.

Barton wiped his moist brow with his handkerchief. "A man with a future and a woman with a past" kept echoing through his mind. "The thing's reversed in this case," he reflected, gazing at his wife. "I'm a man with a past, and Elizabeth is a woman with—ah—a future. Good God! is this paresis?"

Beneath the sword of Damocles time passes with terrifying rapidity. Barton, before the curtain fell at the conclusion of the play, had determined to make a dash for freedom, even at the risk of causing "a scene." But he was hampered by a slow-going temperament and an environment with which he was not familiar. He found himself constantly a few laps behind the course of events. Opportunity after

opportunity escaped him, and he awakened from a nightmare, in which he had been making heroic but futile resolutions, to find himself seated in a coach beside Mrs. Caxton facing Miss Caxton and Reginald Rowland, and wondering vaguely why his hands felt so cold.

"Chahmed, I ahsure you, Mr. Barton," Reggie was saying. "We've known you, of course, for yeahs, sir."

"Mr. Rowland means that we have all read your books, Mr. Barton," volunteered Miss Caxton playfully.

To Barton the rattle of the wheels over the pavement sounded like rushing waters in the ears of a drowning man.

"I well remember your first novel, Mr. Barton," said Mrs. Caxton, who had separated the author and his wife to the end that she might give her whole attention during the drive to "the most difficult" lion she had ever encountered. "A friend came to me with 'A Bachelor's Diary,' praising it extravagantly for its originality and strength. It was a revelation to me, Mr. Barton. Such insight! Such keen knowledge of the world and human nature! You were not married at that time, Mr. Barton?"

"Face to face! Face to face!" cried a mocking voice somewhere upon the outskirts of the universe. Barton sat suddenly erect. It seemed to him that Trotter had insulted him again at a safe distance.

"Beg pardon," he stammered. "You were—ah—saying—madam——"

"'A Bachelor's Diary,'" repeated Mrs. Caxton. "Your first novel, Mr. Barton. Of course, it was written by a bachelor?"

"Undoubtedly, madam. Ah—undoubtedly," assented Barton, pulling himself together and glancing at the scurrying street-lights as he weighed the probable outcome of a jump for liberty.

"But nobody but a married man could have written 'A Spinster's Soul,'" ventured Reggie, anxious to place his little wreath upon the altar of a great author's vanity.

"Will you do me a great favor, Mr. Barton?" cried Miss Caxton, a handsome, vivacious maiden, serving as a snuffer to Reggie's fitful flashes. "Of course, each one of your books is inimitable. But at our Wednesday Morning Reading Circle we actually quarrel over the question, which one of Barton's novels is the greatest? You won't laugh at us, will you, Mr. Barton? We have never come to an agreement, and the discussion has threatened at times to destroy the club. Now, won't you be kind to me, Mr. Barton, and save our Reading Circle from further danger, by telling me which of your novels is your own favorite?"

"It's like picking the winner with all the entries from your own stable," snickered Reggie.

"Won't you be quiet, Mr. Rowland?" cried Miss Caxton.

"I am much interested in your answer, Mr. Barton," said Mrs. Caxton impressively.

"Really, madam," exclaimed Barton, forced to speak, "I'm no judge of—ah——"

He was about to add "rubbish," but paused in short order upon the brink of a precipice.

"All authors say that," exclaimed Miss Caxton. "It's unworthy of your fame for originality, Mr. Barton. I never could understand why an author is not a good judge of his own stories. He wrote them."

"Who wrote 'em?" asked Barton thoughtlessly. Then, recovering himself, he asked: "Which one of the novels, Miss—ah—Caxton, do you—ah—prefer yourself? I suppose you've—ah—read 'em."

Before Miss Caxton's reply could ease the strain upon the lion's nerves, Barton found himself stumbling towards a gleaming abyss from which all lateral escape was cut off by an awning-covered passageway.

X.

WHAT had become an evening of horror to William F. Barton was passing as a season of joy to Rutger Steendam. One's own poems may be worn, under favorable circumstances, as a garment of light. Under the most advantageous conditions, a disguise composed of another fellow's novels is bound to become a robe of Nessus to the wearer. At the moment of which we write, Rutger Steendam was seated at a club garbed in his own poetry and another man's dress-suit, while William F. Barton was gasping at a reception attired in his own dress-suit and another man's reputation for genius. Life had become suddenly a goblet of champagne to the poet and a cup of poison to the impostor.

"Where are your guerillas of Romance, Jenkins?" Tubbs had cried after he had presented Steendam to the oracle and others. "My guest this evening, gentlemen, is a new recruit to the ranks of Realism. We're growing strong, Jenkins."

"After the manner of American cheese," muttered Edgerton to the red-cheeked, white-haired man.

"Have a ball, Tubbs?" suggested the lover of stimulants. "Permit me, Mr.——"

"Steendam," supplied Tubbs. "One of the few, the immortal names that were not born to die."

"That's official!" exclaimed the red-haired grin. "Mr. Steendam, I drink to your good health. He who is publicly claimed by Tubbs is—is——"

"A contributor to the *Monthly Gazette*," drawled Edgerton.

"Don't be discouraged, Edgerton," returned Tubbs, smiling benevolently. "I may yet accept something from your pen."

"Put up your right hand, Tubbs," cried the lawyer, who had drained his toast to Steendam. "Do you solemnly swear——"

"Not outside my office," answered Tubbs quickly.

"We're wandering from the subject in hand, gentlemen," remarked Jenkins pompously.

"What is the subject in hand?" asked the lover of stimulants.

"We come to bury Romance," suggested Edgerton dryly.

"Who killed cock-robin?" shouted the red-haired grin.

"Don't be frightened, young man," said Jenkins, looking at Steendam. "These reactionists are noisy, but harmless. The adherents of a lost cause are apt to be flippant."

"Button, button, who's got the button? In other words, Jenkins, what cause is lost?" Edgerton smiled cheerfully.

"The cause of the dreamers," put in the red-cheeked, white-haired old gentleman. "Genius no longer sees glorious visions in the lonely watches of the night. At the old-time hour of inspiration it is off upon a slumming-expedition, seeking deplorable, depressing data where thieves and harlots make life *real*."

"You grow satirical, my friend," remarked Jenkins haughtily. "Realism does not concern itself of necessity with the outcasts of society. *Humani nihil a me alienum puto*. Upon the banner of the Realists you will find this ancient legend. It is comprehensive, all-embracing, inspiring. First uttered, ages ago, as a protest against puerile imaginings, it means more to us to-day than to the Romans upon whose ears it fell as a startling novelty. You oppose Realism because it photographs the shadows with the sunlight. What, sir, have your 'glorious visions in the lonely watches of the night' done to increase the self-knowledge of the race? What do you seek from fiction, my friend, amusement or enlightenment?"

"You mean," suggested Edgerton, "should a novel kill time or raise chickens?"

"If by chickens is meant a keener insight into the lives of men," cried Jenkins, "your question, Edgerton, proves that you may yet become a brand plucked from the burning."

"Is it—oh, is it—nobler in the flesh to raise chickens than to kill time?" asked the lover of stimulants. "Frankly, my friends, I do not know. But it's more fun to kill time than to raise chickens. Fill my glass, somebody."

"You suggest to me an illustration," said Jenkins, gazing at the last speaker. "Romance, my friends, is a stimulant; Realism is a tonic. The world could well dispense with stimulants, for it abuses them. Without tonics it could never maintain its health. I will go so far as to assert that the crudest bit of realism is of more actual value to men than the most artistic product of the romantic school."

"Always mistaking the aim of art," remarked Edgerton. "I deny, in toto, your general propositions, Jenkins. I claim that flights of fancy are more potent in revealing man to himself than all the facts that were ever summoned to the aid of Realism. But were it otherwise, your position would be untenable. The aim of art is not to reveal man to himself, but to beguile him from the too incessant contemplation of self. The greatest novel ever written, to my mind, was that which led me farthest from the realization that I am I, myself."

"Something you wrote yourself, Edgerton?" asked the red-haired grin.

"Come, come," cried Jenkins, "no personalities, my friends."

"No," answered Edgerton gently, facing the grin with a smile. "The story to which I refer was written by one Walter Scott, a novelist of whom you have never heard, I presume."

"Who *was* Sir Walter Scott?" cried the lover of stimulants. "First in war, first in peace, and first——"

"Will you please come to order, gentlemen?" pleaded Jenkins. "I appeal to you, Tubbs. Laying aside theoretical questions, what is the present market value of Romance compared with Realism?"

"You know my personal predilections, Jenkins," remarked Tubbs, his genial face aglow with his love for all mankind. "But the respective market values of the two schools is another matter. We are making the *Gazette* a medium for the Realists, but I admit that the love of Romance is——"

"The root of all evil," suggested Edgerton.

"Hardly that; you go to extremes, my friend," said Tubbs calmly. "But we outgrow Santa Claus early in life, and lose our youthful enthusiasm for Sir Walter Scott when we have reached maturity. The striking characteristic of the age in which we live is its self-consciousness. An artistic production that makes a deep impression upon this generation must appeal to the progressive spirituality of the race at large."

"Do you mean to assert, sir," asked the old gentleman with red cheeks and white hair, "that Realism as an art-method is an aid to man's spiritual growth?"

"Of course he does," Jenkins hastened to reply. "Only those whose judgment is superficial and ill-considered dare to assert that Realism is an ally to Materialism, so-called. Realism is distinctly ethical in its origin and its aims. Its body is the Latin 'Homo sum,' and its soul is the Greek 'Gnothi seautor.' When you have grasped, sir, the full significance of modern Realism you will see that it is an Athenian goddess made glorious by the spirit of the nineteenth century."

"Who said that oratory was a lost art?" cried the lover of stimulants, glancing around the circle defiantly.

"Whoever said so is mistaken—or I should go out of the business," commented a new-comer from the outskirts of the throng.

"Trotter!" exclaimed Jenkins. "You're the man of all others we want to see. What's all this I hear about Barton? Is it true, Professor, that he's in New York?"

"I left his side ten minutes ago," answered Trotter, saluting acquaintances in various directions.

"I surrender my sword to you, Jenkins," murmured Edgerton. "Your English ally makes your ranks invincible."

"Romance retires with the honors of war," cried the lover of stimulants. "I propose a toast, gentlemen. Here's to Barton, Jenkins, and Realism forever!"

Obedying a sign from Trotter, Jenkins and Tubbs, the latter guiding Steendam by the arm, had withdrawn to an unoccupied corner of the smoke-haunted room.

"You're coming over to Mrs. Caxton's, of course," began Trotter. Then he paused and glanced inquiringly at Rutger Steendam.

"Professor Trotter, Mr. Steendam," said Tubbs. "You'll know each other well later on. Steendam, Trotter, is the coming man in realistic verse. He is to read at Mrs. Caxton's to-night."

Steendam caught his breath and gazed at Tubbs in amazement. The editor had not made clear to the poet the price he was to pay for his initiation into the social world of letters.

"Good!" cried Trotter. "That helps me out. You see, Tubbs, Barton is a shy, eccentric creature. He has no idea that we—I mean Mrs. Caxton and myself—expect him to read one or two selections from his novels to-night. If your poet here breaks the ice, it will be much easier for us to whip Barton into line."

"He's difficult, you say, Trotter?" asked Jenkins.

"He's the most impossible creature I've ever dealt with," admitted Professor Trotter sadly.

"But he's a giant! Barton's a giant," murmured Jenkins.

"A Cardiff giant—made o' stone," grumbled Trotter, lighting a cigarette. "His wife is a nice little woman, with correct ideas about her husband's highest interests. In Mrs. Barton lies my only hope of making the man listen to reason."

"I called on 'em about noon to-day," confessed Tubbs. "Word came down that they could not receive me."

"That's Barton's work," growled Trotter. "I must confess, my friends, that I'm very nervous about the outcome of his *débüt* to-night. I'm playing a game of chance with Barton. If he makes a fiasco at Mrs. Caxton's it will be very difficult ever to repair the damage. Humpty-dumpty sat on a wall! But come, there's no time to waste. Pardon me, Tubbs; your friend's name is——"

"Steendam,—Rutger Steendam," answered the editor.

Trotter threw aside his cigarette and scanned the poet's face keenly.

"You'll do, young man," he said brusquely, leading the way towards their exit. "I'll give Barton a shot about 'English pluck.' He'll hesitate 'to flunk a dare' from an American boy."

XI.

"You are not fond of this kind of thing, Mr. Barton? I'm very sorry. But I fear that you will be forced to meet my guests. Everybody has something nice to say to you, don't you know?"

Barton, red-faced, wild-eyed, desperate, gazed into Mrs. Caxton's smiling countenance, undecided whether he should make an appeal, a protest, or a mad dash for freedom. He was conscious of the light that beat upon his usurped but undesired throne. Men, apparently bent upon reading the secrets of his soul, stared at him curiously. Beautiful women, with naked necks and arms, circled around him until his distraught mind recalled a picture he had once seen of the "Temptation of St. Anthony," and he strove eagerly, but in vain, to catch a glimpse of Mrs. Barton. Pulling himself together by a great effort of will, the agitated Englishman met the gaze of his hostess unflinchingly for a moment.

"Mrs.—ah—Caxton," began Barton, "it is really imperative that I should make an—ah—explanation. I am not, madam, I never have been—ah——"

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Barton," said Mrs. Caxton gently, "and I honor you for it. The truly great men in any line of endeavor are always modest and retiring. But, you know, my friend, that sacrifices must be made upon the altar of success. The pygmies must be placated. They insist upon kissing the hands of the giants. If they are not granted this privilege, they grow mischievous."

An uncanny buzzing made the Englishman's ears ache. Far out upon the remote boundaries of infinity he heard Trotter's voice muttering wickedly: "Face to face, Barton! Face to face!"

Then the pygmies, male and female, began to pass before him in review. Among them were those who pressed his ice-cold hand. Others glanced up at him beseechingly, as though they craved an epigram from his parched and speechless tongue. How they grinned and chattered and strove to make him speak! Smiling pygmy followed smiling pygmy, and now and then one bolder than the rank and file would ask the giant a direct and pointed question. But the fountain of Barton's answers had dried up. He was a lion minus the roar, a target without a bell.

"What detestable things you have said about women!" exclaimed a vivacious matron, smiling at the giant. "I *must* meet Mrs. Barton."

"Where is she?" asked the Englishman eagerly, but before the answer came, impatient pygmies had forced the vivacious matron to move on.

"Why *did* you write 'A Spinster's Soul,' Mr. Barton?" cried a laughing maiden who should have been in bed. "I really believe that you use an X-ray for a pen."

"Was Arabella drawn from life?" asked an elderly woman, eyeing Barton sternly.

"Well—ah—really——" began the innocent impostor.

His inquisitor thrust her severe face close to his.

"Arabella, sir, is a literary crime! I came here to-night to tell you so."

Barton breathed a sigh of relief as "the Arabella woman," as he called her in after days, passed from view. At that instant his reluctant hand was seized by a pale-faced youth, who bent forward to whisper:

"I'm going to look you up, Barton. I know you from your books. I'll show you a bit o' the town that'll make a wide-open chaptah for your next novel. You're at the Wahldoff, I believe?"

"Mrs. Caxton!" cried Barton in desperation, turning to implore his hostess for relief. Far away upon the edge of the pushing throng he caught a glimpse of her imperial head. A cold wave struck his spinal column. Mrs. Caxton was engaged in earnest conversation with Professor Trotter.

"Do you feel faint, Mr. Barton?" asked a sympathetic voice. "The air is very close."

Barton managed to smile gratefully at the good woman who had observed his momentary pallor. For one mad instant he weighed the feasibility of a swoon or fit. But the pygmies gave him no time to drive a nail through an unstable project.

"I have just heard that you have promised to read to us to-night, Mr. Barton," cried a gushing young woman with fluffy hair and soulful eyes. "I am *so* excited! Which one of your novels have you chosen? They're all perfectly dear, but I *do* wish you'd give us that scene where Arabella proposes to the earl."

"Arabella again! Oh Lord!" muttered Barton to himself. Then Trotter seemed to shout triumphantly to him across the drawing-room: "Face to face, old fellow! Face to face!"

A portly, middle-aged man, following the gushing young woman, had overheard her words.

"Be careful what you read, Mr. Barton," he said, as he pushed past the Englishman. "I have my wife and daughters with me, sir."

Barton glared at the retreating figure of the apprehensive husband and father. A wild longing to shock these inconsistent people came

over the Englishman. It passed away when he found himself gazing down into the blushing face of one of the *débutantes* of the year.

"Oh Mr. Barton," cried the beautiful girl pluckily, "won't you tell me how you feel when your wonderful epigrams come to you? What I mean is, do you have an attack of a lot of them at once, or do they creep over you one by one?"

Her manner was irresistibly fascinating. Barton was astounded to find himself tempted to bend down and kiss her, murmuring, "Go home, little girl, and go to sleep." At once the suspicion that paresis had come to him crept into his mind again.

"I'll tell you, Miss—ah—some other time," he managed to say to her. Then he felt as if Trotter's hand was at his throat, choking him. He impressed the next comer as apoplectic.

"You mustn't overwork yourself, Mr. Barton," said a motherly, middle-aged woman, who looked out of place in her present environment. "Are you real strong?"

"In—ah—perfect health, madam,—perfect health," gasped Barton, glancing angrily towards Mrs. Caxton and Professor Trotter. They were making their way towards him, followed by a tall youth, whose clear-cut face was slightly flushed.

"This is splendid, Barton," whispered Trotter in his lion's ear. "Magnificent gathering, sir. The brightest minds and the best blood in the city, Barton. Your witticisms, sir, are coin of the realm to-night. I want you to meet a young poet—a Realist after your own heart, Barton. We have persuaded him to read a few verses later on; and frankly, Barton, I hope, when the ice is broken, that you'll find it in your heart to repay these good people for the patronage they have given to your books."

"This is Mr. Rutger Steendam, Mr. Barton," said Mrs. Caxton at that moment, bringing the poet within range of the impostor's vision.

The Englishman bowed distantly, and Steendam waited for the great master to speak. All around them arose the chatter of a throng growing more loquacious as midnight drew near. The youth stood silent, seemingly awe-struck, before the speechless Englishman, while Mrs. Caxton and Trotter watched with breathless interest the outcome of their venture. The silence had reached an awkward stage, when Steendam remarked hesitatingly:

"I owe you much, Mr. Barton. You have been, for several years, an inspiration to my humble, unrecognized pen."

"How beautiful that is, Mr. Barton," cried Mrs. Caxton, unable longer to repress her vivacity. "It must be glorious to reflect that one's work is a spur to genius in out-of-the-way corners of the world."

An expression of intense weariness crept over Barton's face. He

had exhausted too much nervous energy since leaving his hotel to find sufficient vigor at this crisis for "a scene." How could he explain to these deluded creatures that he despised novels, that he never read them, and that he had even found it difficult to forgive his wife for writing a mere novelette.

"Where's—ah—Mrs. Barton?" he asked, snubbing Steendam and gazing at Mrs. Caxton. His hostess laughed gayly.

"Mr. Barton! Mr. Barton!" she exclaimed, waving a finger playfully in the air. "Can it be that you have forgotten your famous passage about jealous husbands? In 'Men, Women, and Murder' you call them 'the unexpurgated remnants of primeval man.' Surely, Mr. Barton, you are not 'a remnant'?"

"That's not answering my—ah—question, madam," grumbled Barton.

Professor Trotter stifled something under his breath, while a look of utter hopelessness spread over his face.

"Mrs. Barton is not neglected, sir," remarked Mrs. Caxton, a touch of hauteur in her voice. There was a limit beyond which the eccentricities of genius could not be allowed to go. "She is in the conservatory, Mr. Barton, chatting with Mr. Robert Perkins, one of our leading publishers, sir."

Barton gasped, turned red, and then suddenly lost his color. Jealousy? There stood the very incarnation of that old-fashioned passion glaring at an amazed hostess.

"A—a—ah—a *publisher*, did you say?" the Englishman finally found voice enough to ask.

Trotter placed a hand upon Barton's arm.

"I'm astonished, Barton. Control yourself. Perkins is seventy if he is a day," whispered the lion-tamer soothingly. "Where's your consistency, sir? You write like a lost angel, and act like a boy. I implore you, Barton, not to make a scene."

Trotter's concluding phrase had an instantaneous effect upon the Briton. He would control himself. He must not, though Elizabeth might be surrounded by a shoal of publishers, make a scene. He would go to her, rescue her from the tempter, and, in spite of an army of Trotters and Caxtons, carry her off to their hotel. There, before they slept, he would see to it that she had destroyed the menacing manuscript of the rubbish that she had penned. Offering his arm to Mrs. Caxton, Barton said:

"You will take me to her—ah—madam?" Then he added, an explanation seeming to be demanded by good form, "I have, Mrs. Caxton, a most amazing—ah—prejudice against—ah—publishers."

Mrs. Caxton laughed merrily.

"That's quite characteristic of unsuccessful authors, Mr. Barton.

But I didn't know that the feeling was ever entertained by writers who have really won a place in letters."

Professor Trotter followed the pair with his gaze for a moment. Then he turned and looked into Steendam's face.

"It's damned queer, young man!—damned queer!" he murmured.

"But genius, sir——" began the poet.

"Bosh! To Hades with genius!" growled Trotter, starting in pursuit of his impossible lion.

XII.

MRS. CAXTON had not voiced the whole truth when, in defence of her reputation as a hostess, she had asserted that Mrs. Barton had not been exposed to neglect. Curiosity regarding the wife of the Birmingham realist was universal. She had become the more interesting to that portion of the public represented by Mrs. Caxton's guests from the fact that it had been generally believed that the novelist was unmarried. In so far as William Farquhar Barton's writings indicated his personal attitude towards matrimony, they seemed to preclude the possibility that the author had sought the attainment of domestic bliss. The great realist, so American novel-readers had been led to believe, was a middle-aged cynic who had made a mystery of his personal appearance, habits, and manner of life for various reasons easily comprehended by the worldling. There were those who asserted that William Farquhar Barton had avoided publicity that, by stimulating gossip, he might increase the vogue of his sparkling, daring books. There were others who hinted at less worthy reasons for the novelist's persistent avoidance of the interviewers, the photographers, and the Trotters, who pay homage to fame for ulterior motives.

Mrs. Barton, therefore, appealed to Mrs. Caxton's guests both as a revelation and an enigma. While she might detract, in some degree, from her husband's availability as a lion, she added vastly to his fascinations as a startling literary conundrum. Barton as a bachelor would have been explicable. Barton as a married man gave the lie to his own avowals. Three factors had come into the problem,—the novelist, his wife, and his writings. Around Mrs. Barton, at the entrance to the conservatory, had gathered a group of well-bred men and women anxious to solve by experiment a mystery that defied their syllogisms. The elder Miss Caxton supported Mrs. Barton throughout this trying ordeal, while Mr. Robert Perkins, the aged publisher, and Mr. Percival Tubbs, the beaming editor, led the attack of a band of determined, though deferential, interrogation-points.

"Your criticism of 'What Mr. Periwinkle Thought of Himself' is amazingly just, Mrs. Barton," the courtly old publisher was saying. "I must congratulate Mr. Barton. He is an author to be envied.

It is seldom that a writer has always at his elbow a competent adviser."

Mrs. Barton's thin cheeks were spotted with small dabs of hectic red. In her large, dark eyes gleamed a light that flashed from a soul rejoicing in its environment. Among other valuables, the little woman had left her conscience locked in at the Waldorf. For one glorious, long-to-be-remembered night she would drink deep of the cup of joy, satisfying, for all the weary years to come, the cravings of a spirit that had fed too long upon itself. She would pit her ingenuity against the world, trusting for safety to her husband's reticence and hesitancy, and compel men and women to acknowledge that she was the intellectual peer of a great novelist. While Barton found himself beset by horror succeeding horror, Mrs. Barton recklessly embraced a demoralizing opportunity.

"And let me add, Mrs. Barton," cried Tubbs smilingly, "that your estimate of epigrams as epigrams is delightfully original. Does Mr. Barton know what you think of them?"

"What *is* Mrs. Barton's estimate of epigrams as epigrams?" asked the lover of stimulants from the outskirts of the group.

"You must repeat what you said of them, Mrs. Barton," cried Miss Caxton enthusiastically.

"I was remarking," said Mrs. Barton demurely, "that epigrams lose *so* much by quotation. When they were young they were cradled by Truth, but they grow hard by contact with the world. An epigram is so fickle! It never hits us twice in the same spot."

"All of which is rank nonsense," murmured the omnipresent Edgerton to himself. "The little woman has lived too long with genius." Then he said aloud,—

"Will you permit me, Mrs. Barton, to ask you what is your opinion of the romantic school of fiction?"

"What a question, Mr. Edgerton, to put to the wife of William Farquhar Barton!" cried Miss Caxton, placing a protecting hand upon Mrs. Barton's arm. There came a nervous tremor to that same arm. The name "Farquhar" seemed to carry a pass-key to the receptacle at the Waldorf in which the Englishwoman had locked her conscience. But she was forced to speak, for many questioning eyes rested upon her flushed face.

"You must understand me, sir," she said gently, "when I say that I am not voicing Mr. Barton's literary tenets."

"You mean to imply, then, Mrs. Barton," remarked Percival Tubbs, a note of surprise in his tones, "that you still cherish a fondness for Romance?"

"Horrible possibility!" muttered the lover of stimulants mischievously.

"How can I help it?" asked Mrs. Barton, regretting for a fleeting instant that she had courted her present eminence.

"Oh Mrs. Barton!" exclaimed Miss Caxton.

"What is Romance?" cried the lover of stimulants gayly. Silence reigned at the conservatory's entrance for a moment. The throng awaited Mrs. Barton's answer. She caught her breath, and then plunged boldly forward.

"The Realism of to-day is the Romance of to-morrow," she remarked oracularly. "A photograph of the scene before us, Miss Caxton, would charm us by its truth, but a hundred years from now its very unreality would be its chief fascination to posterity."

"Well spoken, Mrs. Barton," exclaimed Robert Perkins, the publisher. "I begin to suspect, madam, that your husband's books owe more to you than the public has ever realized."

"But, Mr. Perkins," drawled Edgerton, "there is much in Mr. Barton's novels to which Mrs. Barton could not subscribe. Is it not so, madam?"

"*'A Spinster's Soul,'* for instance," cried the lover of stimulants recklessly. "What *do* you think of *'A Spinster's Soul,'* Mrs. Barton?"

"What bad form!" remarked somebody protestingly.

"Forgive him, Mrs. Barton," pleaded Edgerton politely. "My question dealt wholly in generalities."

"To cover a multitude of Barton's sins," growled the lover of stimulants under his breath.

The red spots upon Mrs. Barton's cheeks had disappeared and she looked pale and weary at that moment. Her eyes rested for a time upon Edgerton's attractive countenance.

"You will forgive me, sir, for not answering your question, won't you? Is it not enough for me to say that I am very proud of—of Mr. Barton?"

Barton, with Mrs. Caxton upon his arm, halted, glaring at his wife, upon the outer rim of her inquisitors. Had his ears played him another trick? Could it be possible that his wife actually stood there, surrounded by a crowd of strangers, and publicly announcing her pride in him, her husband, than whom no man upon earth could be, at that moment, less worthy of admiration? "I am very proud of Mr. Barton." Barton could not reciprocate. He was not proud of Mrs. Barton.

"Mr. Barton tells me that he has a prejudice against publishers," cried Mrs. Caxton, who had not forgiven the lion for his disregard of social amenities. "Mr. Perkins, may I present you to him?"

The dignified old publisher bowed politely. "I regret, sir, that you have not become reconciled to us. But even genius must pay its debt, Mr. Barton, to the man of business."

Again the Englishman's detestation of "a scene" crept over him to tie his tongue. He found himself reversing the publisher's proposition and wondering why a man of business should be forced to pay a debt to genius. The antics of his mind frightened him. The reflection that paresis was of slow growth gave him little comfort. There might be a galloping form of the disease!

It flashed upon the mind of the lover of stimulants that a great opportunity had come to him.

"Do you, oh Mr. Barton, *do* you believe that 'A Spinster's Soul' is the Realism of to-day, destined to become the Romance of to-morrow?"

The daring of the questioner silenced all voices for a moment. Barton reddened and his eyes gleamed angrily.

"I think, sir, that the—ah—whole thing's—ah—rubbish! Rubbish, sir!"

Mrs. Barton trembled with apprehension. She realized that she stood poised upon the brink of a precipice.

"A most sweeping indictment of Romance!" cried Percival Tubbs gleefully, forgetting for the moment that it was Mrs. Barton's proposition that her husband had swept into a dust-heap. "Realism is Realism, yesterday, to-day, and forever." Seizing his opportunity, the editor of the *Monthly Gazette* drew near to Barton.

"I was sorry not to find you in to-day, Mr. Barton," he said, displaying his most winning smile. "I wanted to talk to you regarding a serial."

"A cereal, sir?" growled Barton. "What cereal? I'm in iron, sir."

The smile upon the editor's face was lost in an expression of amazement. He had asked for bread and received a stone. Barton glared here and there defiantly. Suddenly Trotter, tall, overbearing, diabolical, resumed command of events. Barton's face withdrew its challenge.

"You had planned to have Mr. Steendam read to us after supper, Mrs. Caxton, had you not?" asked Trotter.

"Poetry is so much more impressive after eating," cried Mrs. Caxton gayly. "If you will give me your arm, Mr. Barton, we will lead the way to the supper-room. We place Mrs. Barton in your care, Professor Trotter. Won't you find Mr. Steendam, Mr. Tubbs, and follow us?"

For an instant Barton hesitated. Had he been unhampered he would have defied etiquette and fled precipitately. But he caught Mrs. Barton's pleading gaze at that moment, and weakness withered his budding dare-deviltry. Furthermore, he realized that Trotter's taunting eyes were fixed upon him at this crisis. As he offered his arm to his hostess, Barton swore a silent oath to settle his score with that "Face to Face Man" before he made his escape to England.

XIII.

IF church-yards yawn at midnight, 'tis because their inhabitants recall the delights begotten of late suppers. Breakfast is a necessity, luncheon a stop-gap, dinner a recreation, but the midnight meal is the crowning triumph of the table. The success of Mrs. Caxton's endeavor to establish a literary salon had never been jeopardized by too great a reliance upon feasts of reason and the vintage of the soul. She had always comprehended the subtle affinity between entremets and a bon mot; between epicureanism and epigrams. Long experience as a hostess had served to strengthen her belief that a literary lion is apt to become a bore if he be allowed to roam about a drawing-room in a state of hunger. "The glory of our salad days is one thing, and the glory of our salad nights is another," a famous author had remarked to Mrs. Caxton once after supper. More and more, as she had pursued her triumphant career as a patroness of literature, had she been impressed with her dependence upon the genius of her chef. To-night the success of her entertainment seemed to depend upon the effect that champagne and croquettes would have upon the adamantine Barton.

"What *do* you think of him?" the younger Miss Caxton was asking, as she glanced up at Rutger Steendam, who was seated by her side, vainly endeavoring to forget the awful ordeal that awaited him after supper. They had been gazing across the dining-room at the lion of the hour and his attentive captors.

"I'm inclined to believe, Miss Caxton," answered the poet earnestly, "that he is to be found at his best in his books."

The young woman, vivacious, dark, petite, laughed merrily.

"All authors are, are they not?" she exclaimed. "But Mr. Barton may be an exception. He certainly looks thoroughly respectable."

A puzzled expression crept into Steendam's clear-cut, mobile face.

"You don't approve of his novels, then, Miss Caxton?"

"I think they're simply abominable, Mr. Steendam. We won't discuss them. I want you to tell me all about your poems. I must confess to you that I have never read them."

"No apology is necessary," remarked Steendam. "You see, Miss Caxton, they have never been printed. Mr. Tubbs discovered me."

Miss Caxton laughed merrily.

"It's *so* sad!" she exclaimed.

"Pardon me, but I don't understand you," said the poet wonderingly. "Sad that Tubbs discovered me?"

"No! oh, no! That's delightful, of course. But it's too bad to think that you're going to be spoiled. How do you know that you are a poet, Mr. Steendam?"

"I can't offer you any convincing proof of it, Miss Caxton," admitted Steendam, with exaggerated mournfulness. "Tubbs vouches for me—but—"

"But Tubbs is—Tubbs!" exclaimed the irreverent young woman. "Frankly, Mr. Steendam, he looks to me like a man who would take more pleasure in golf than in lyrics."

"You are very cruel, Miss Caxton," complained the poet, gazing into her dancing eyes protestingly. "A terrible crisis is confronting me, and you are deliberately undermining my self-confidence. If I lose my faith in Tubbs, I am doomed. The mere suspicion that I am not a poet, that I am self-deceived, that Tubbs is mistaken in me, has turned my blood to iced-water. I tremble, Miss Caxton. I'd bolt the whole thing, if it weren't for—"

The girl glanced up at him cooly.

"Yes, Mr. Steendam? If it weren't for—?"

"For a great longing I have to learn your opinion of my work."

"I'd advise you 'to bolt,'" she laughed. "Forgive me," she added at once. "That sounds inhospitable. But I'll tell you a secret."

"Thanks."

"You now see mamma's 'salon' at its best. After supper it's deadly."

"What *do* you mean, Miss Caxton?"

"Well, you see, everybody wants to talk, but nobody can, for genius has the floor."

"How you must suffer, Miss Caxton!" murmured the poet sympathetically. "If it were not for Tubbs, I'd promise you not to read a line to-night."

"No, that would be too bad. A few short poems—they are short, are they not?—won't be unendurable, you know. But just imagine that pompous old Englishman over there reading a whole chapter from one of his detestable novels. Mrs. Barton looks like a nice, bright little woman. I wonder how she can smile when her husband is about to give himself away."

Steendam was amazed, and showed it. The younger Miss Caxton had defied his power of classification.

"And am I?" he asked nervously.

"Are you what, Mr. Steendam?"

"Am I about 'to give myself away'?"

"That remains to be seen," said the girl, smiling at him with perfect frankness. "You know the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If you are a real poet—"

"Well? If I am a real poet?"

"Then, Mr. Steendam, I shall gladly pay you the homage that insignificance owes to genius."

"But," persisted the youth, "how are you to know? You find these after-supper readings 'deadly.' I'm sure to bore you."

"That does not follow. I am fond of the real thing, Mr. Steendam."

"And there remains the chance that I may be 'the real thing.' I assure you, Miss Caxton, that I have often doubted it myself. I sincerely hope I am. I long for your approval."

To this worldly-wise young woman there was a refreshing simplicity in Steendam's words and bearing that rebuked her mischievous inclinations.

"But if you *do* win a triumph, Mr. Steendam," she sighed, "it will make such a difference with you."

"Just how?" he asked eagerly. He felt vaguely that she had paid him a compliment.

"You will be praised, and—presto!—you are a poseur. You are very young, you know."

Steendam laughed aloud. She was confronting him with a sedate, middle-aged expression upon her fascinating, changeable face.

"I am lost if I fail, and ruined if I succeed," he exclaimed ruefully. "You were right in advising me to bolt. But I have not the courage to run away."

"Why not?" asked the girl, a challenge in her dark eyes.

"I might never see you again, Miss Caxton, if I played the coward now."

"I almost hope you won't make a hit," she murmured. "You will be so easily spoiled if you are crowned with victory."

"Is 'the real thing' so quickly damaged by recognition?" he asked.

"It is a tremendous test, Mr. Steendam," said the girl earnestly. "A man who can wear the bays and retain his genuineness is great—and rare. Is it not so, Mr. Rowland? You have met Mr. Steendam?"

Miss Caxton's eyes were again alight with mischief as she presented Reggie to the poet. "We were discussing, Mr. Rowland, the dangers into which success forces genius. They are real, are they not?"

"Oh, but, Miss Caxton, I'm not a genius, don't you know. Can't say, really." Reggie seemed to feel hurt.

"Mr. Rowland," cried the girl with exaggerated fervor, "I didn't mean to accuse you of genius. Please forgive me, if my words misled you."

Steendam's gaze was fixed upon the lion-tamers across the room. Mrs. Caxton's face wore a hopeful look. Barton sat beside her sipping champagne. Not far away stood Mrs. Barton and Professor Trotter engaged in earnest conversation. There was a sound of revelry by night, and Mrs. Caxton's guests chatted and laughed gayly. Presently Steendam's subconscious self asserted its claims, and he realized that

Reggie had grown loquacious and emphatic. He heard Miss Caxton say,—

"There must be some mistake, Mr. Rowland."

"That's what Van says," Miss Caxton—a most stahltling mistake."

"I mean, Mr. Rowland, that Mr. Vansittart has made a mistake."

"Cahn't be! Van has a wondahful memory. Knows everybody, everywhere. Met Bahton at the Savage Club. Small, thin man, with gray beahd."

Miss Caxton remained silent and thoughtful for a moment. Then she said,—

"You will do me a great favor, Mr. Rowland?"

"A thousand, Miss Caxton. Delighted, I'm suah!"

"Go to Mr. Vansittart at once, then, and tell him to say nothing further. You must see, Mr. Rowland, that this is no time for an explanation—if one is needed."

"I'm off, Miss Caxton! Don't be worried, will you? Van may have made a blundah. Hope he has!"

Reggie hurried away, and Miss Caxton glanced at the poet. "Can I be of any service to you, Miss Caxton?" asked Steendam. The girl hesitated a moment.

"Can you keep a secret?" she murmured, no longer smiling.

"For a time, at least," he answered playfully.

"I'll tell you something, then," she whispered, as the poet bent towards her. "There's a man here who says that Barton, the novelist, is not our guest to-night."

"What *do* you mean?" gasped Steendam.

"I hardly know," admitted the puzzled girl. "I suspect that mamma's lion isn't a lion at all."

"But—but—Miss Caxton, why not make sure? If there's a mistake, can't it be set right at once?"

"Don't think of such a thing, Mr. Steendam. I shall do what I can to keep matters just as they are."

"Yes?" Steendam felt that she held something back. Suddenly she laughed merrily, and then, in a low tone, said,—

"The first thing to do, Mr. Steendam, is to find out whether you are a poet."

"And then?"

"There will be time enough then to discover whether the Englishman over there is a novelist."

At that moment Tubbs interrupted their tête-à-tête.

"The hour of destiny has struck, Steendam," he cried, beaming upon his discovery. "You feel up to it?"

"I hardly know," he answered, gazing down the while at Miss Caxton. "Whether it be failure or success, I am bound to lose."

"But it's better to be ruined by success than by failure. I hope, Mr. Steendam——"

"Yes? You hope——"

"I hope you are a poet," she whispered, as Tubbs urged his embryonic lion towards the drawing-room.

XIV.

DESPAIR had driven William F. Barton to drink. Shut off from the outer world and surrounded by his foes, he had found relief from a hopeless agony in champagne. The sparkling wine had not only eased the bitterness of his soul, but it had stimulated his courage and reconciled him for a time to his environment. Unaccustomed to the beady vintage that bubbled towards his parched lips, Barton had drunk gratefully at first, to quench his thirst; and delightedly, at last, to drown the remnants of his late unrest. Hospitable by nature and habit, and quickly noting the softening influence of champagne upon her untamed lion, Mrs. Caxton had encouraged the Englishman in his reckless indulgence in a treacherous stimulant.

"You were—ah—saying, madam?" asked Barton, removing a napkin from his lips to display his first smile to the grateful eyes of his hostess.

"The thought came to me, Mr. Barton," answered Mrs. Caxton impressively, motioning to a waiter to refill her guest's goblet,—“the thought came to me that your first impressions of New York would make such an entertaining magazine article.”

"Just mention the matter to Elizabeth—Mrs. Barton, you know. She likes that kind of thing—ah—Mrs. Caxton."

Mrs. Caxton's face indicated her surprise.

"Mrs. Barton writes, then?" she asked.

"She's hit off that old curmudgeon MacGregor to the life—ah—madam." A gleam of pride glowed in Barton's eyes for a moment, and he sipped his wine contentedly.

"This is news, indeed," exclaimed Mrs. Caxton enthusiastically, suppressing her curiosity regarding MacGregor. "The public, I believe, is unaware of Mrs. Barton's ability as an authoress?"

Barton downed his mounting exhilaration for a moment by an effort of will. He regretted the admission that had slipped from him.

"Understand me—ah—Mrs. Caxton. The public must not know it. The public's to blame, madam, for encouraging—ah—rubbish. Don't mention MacGregor to—ah—Mrs. Barton, will you? It's been a great blow to me, I assure you."

The Englishman's cheeks were flushed, and, in spite of himself, he smiled. He wondered vaguely why he had so long cherished a prejudice against champagne. Suddenly he went on:

"It's that terrible Face to Face man, Mrs. Caxton. He's—ah—unbearable, really. What's his name? Ah—Trotter! Professor Trotter! There he stands, madam, talking to—ah—Mrs. Barton. She'll put him into a story. Unless I exaggerate Elizabeth's ability—and rubbish is not in—ah—my line, madam—she'll do Trotter to the life."

A revelation had come to Mrs. Caxton, clearing up a great mystery. William F. Barton's wife, it was evident, wrote his novels, and the most gifted of English realists was, in fact, a woman. Professor Trotter, apparently, knew the truth of the matter. His attentions to Mrs. Barton testified to his enlightenment.

"I hope I may have the privilege of knowing Mrs. Barton well," said Mrs. Caxton after her most effective dowager-duchess manner. "She is a very brilliant woman."

Barton beamed upon his hostess. Life was again worth living. He had almost forgotten that he was an impostor. At the worst, Trotter was to blame for whatever deception had been practised. It was pleasant to Barton to hear his wife praised by an elderly mondaine who could not readily be imposed upon. It is highly creditable to any man to marry a clever woman. Yes, he would indulge in just one more drop of uncorked optimism. How had it happened that he had been contemplating all day an immediate return to England? He had been unjust and ungrateful to these hospitable Americans.

"I'm sorry you don't know MacGregor—ah—Mrs. Caxton," he murmured confidentially. "If you won't say a word to that Face to Face—ah—Professor Trotter, madam, I'll admit to you that she's hit him off to the life."

"You refer, I imagine, to Mrs. Barton's latest?" suggested Mrs. Caxton, gladly making hay while the sun shone.

"Her first—and last, if we get away safe," answered Barton with perilous frankness.

At that moment Mrs. Caxton caught Professor Trotter's eye and read therein an appeal for help. Reginald Rowland drifted within reach on the instant.

"I must speak to Mrs. Barton," said Mrs. Caxton, arising. "Take my seat, Mr. Rowland, and talk books to Mr. Barton."

"Neat, dry wine, don't you think?" remarked Reggie, as a waiter supplied him with champagne and refilled the Englishman's glass. Barton glanced at the new-comer suspiciously, but found nothing alarming in Reggie's outward seeming. The latter smiled pleasantly, and Barton succumbed willingly to internal and external incentives to good-fellowship.

"The first time I evah tasted this brand," went on Reggie, "was in London—at the Savage Club, you know."

The youth eyed the Englishman searchingly, but Barton's counte-

nance, slightly flushed, showed no signs of guilt. He made no comment, however, upon Reggie's enticing lead.

"You must be a great workah, Mr. Barton," began the youth, taking another tack. "Do you do much of your writing at night?"

"Yes. Most of it in—ah—bed," answered the Englishman recklessly. He had begun to dislike this annoying cross-questioning.

"How charmingly eccentric!" cried Reggie laughingly. Then he unrolled his features and looked serious. "And about the trilogy, Mr. Barton? Vansittart, don't you know, says that he has heard all about it."

"Ah—all about what?" asked Barton, a shade redder than before.

"About your trilogy," persisted Reggie, who seemed to be enjoying himself hugely. "Some elevah fellows were talking about it the last time Van was ovah."

Barton had discovered that in an excess of champagne lie many varied emotions. Resignation had been quickly followed by resentment.

"Tell your friend, sir, that he has been—ah—misinformed," said the Englishman sternly. He instantly regretted his severity, for Reggie looked almost angelic at that moment.

"Mr. Rowland!" cried the younger Miss Caxton on the instant. Reggie sprang to his feet, smiling sheepishly. "You will take me to the drawing-room, will you not? Mr. Steendam is about to read to us."

"Don't be angry with me, will you, Miss Ethel?" pleaded Reggie repentantly, as he escorted her from the supper-room. "I wasn't pressing him very hard, don't you know."

"It isn't so bad as you think, Mr. Rowland," said the girl. "I asked mamma about it a moment ago. He's really Barton, you see, but Mrs. Barton writes his novels."

"Reahly!" drawled Reggie, unconvinced. "Then poor Van should consult a—what-do-you-call 'em."

To Barton, adrift in the supper-room, came Trotter, smiling.

"You'll forgive me, old man, won't you, for deserting you so long? You're looking very fit. Charming hostess, Mrs. Caxton! Her chef's an artist—of the realistic school, eh, Barton? I've got news for you, my dear fellow. You're reprieved, Barton! Do you hear me? You're reprieved! I've learned a trick or two in my time, Barton. Don't give the crowd all they want at first. Keep 'em on tiptoe. Here, waiter! Two glasses at once. We've just time for a toast, Barton. I touch your glass, sir. We'll drink to Mrs. Barton, sir, and her success to-night."

The Englishman drained his goblet, and then gasped:

"I demand, sir, an—ah—explanation! Confound you—ah—Trotter! What *do* you mean, sir?"

"Barton! Barton!" cried Trotter deprecatingly. "You must control yourself, sir. When you learn the truth, Barton, you will acknowledge your debt of gratitude to me. Confess, sir, that you had no great desire to read to these people to-night, Barton."

"Read to 'em!" exclaimed the Englishman. "Read to 'em—damn 'em!"

"You go to extremes, my friend," protested Trotter. "You'll spill the milk beyond recovery if you don't check your temper, Barton. You're too choleric, old man. I had a friend, Barton,—he died of paresis——"

"Good God!" muttered Barton.

"Don't take it that way," implored Trotter repentantly. "I didn't mean to imply that you resembled him, Barton. But brace up, old fellow. Didn't I tell you that I had effected your reprieve?"

"I believe you did, sir. Will you kindly tell me what you—ah—meant by it?" Barton had drawn himself up to his full height, and, red and pompous, was confronting the Professor haughtily.

"I meant this, Barton," answered Trotter smoothly. "I intend to give you a splendid advertisement without disappointing the crowd or sacrificing your value as a novelty. Fortunately, Mrs. Barton has been persuaded to do us a good turn."

Barton strove to voice a question, but words eluded him.

"Come, old man," said Trotter gently, grasping Barton by the arm and urging him towards the peopled entrance to the drawing-room. "Tubbs's poet is to lead off. I want to hear him."

"And then?" the Englishman managed to ask hoarsely.

"And then, my friend," whispered the lion-tamer, "Mrs. Barton is to read a chapter from 'A Spinster's Soul.'"

There came a ringing and a roar to Barton's ears. There appeared to be countless corners to the room, chasing each other in a circle. He seemed to be going 'round and 'round, beside the unspeakable Trotter, pursuing an elusive crowd of men and women. Suddenly the circular motion ceased and he found himself standing motionless behind a wall of black coats. The noise in his ears had become more subdued, and he realized that he was listening to the rhythmical tones of a young man's musical, far-reaching voice.

XV.

MISS ETHEL CAXTON had done an injustice to the habitués of her mother's salon in asserting that genius was dreaded as a snuffer to the wax-candles of small-talk. "The real thing"—for which Miss Ethel herself cherished an appreciative regard—was received always with enthusiasm by an audience that paid the courtesy of mild applause even to mediocrity. But "the real thing" is not often in evidence at

midnight. At that hour genius prefers solitude or sleep to the exhausting joys of a drawing-room ovation. Genius suffereth long and is coy. It may, like charity, cover a multitude of sins, but it is modest, retiring, self-distrustful. The clever man looks upon his work and knows that it is clever. The soul of genius contemplates its concrete manifestations and realizes their limitations. The former rejoices in the noisy acclamations of the crowd; the latter craves retirement that he may again strive for adequate expression. To the clever man recognition brings the satisfaction for which he longed; upon genius it forces unwelcome obligations. The average man is fond of denying the existence of genius. It follows that neither the average man nor genius is wholly at ease when they first come face to face.

It was a red-letter day for the average man when an industrious dyspeptic asserted that genius consists in "an infinite capacity for taking pains." The average man at once jumped to the pleasing conclusion that by exerting his force of will he might laboriously climb the pathway up which the world's immortals have made their shining way. Upon further reflection, perhaps, he has decided that the mountain is too steep and high, that the air is chill and the outlook lonely from the summit, that the crown to be won above the clouds is a tawdry bauble too dear at the price of infinite pains. And so the average man looks askance at genius mounting upward and pretends to hold the latter's achievements in slight regard.

If the truth be told, genius consists in an infinite capacity for taking short cuts; it flies where mediocrity is forced to crawl. The inspired may sleep and still create; the uninspired shall shun slumber, toil forever, and make no new thing.

For the first time in his career Rutger Steendam confronted a throng of average men and women who silently resented the idea that genius stood before them in the flesh. Here came a youth whose name the voice of Fame had never before whispered to their reluctant ears. Reluctant ears, indeed! The world is jealous of its prerogatives as the court to which genius is forced to appeal. The memory of the average man is already overtaxed by the ever-lengthening list of names that are not as other names. He looks with antagonism upon a new candidate for the eternal crown of bays. He willingly uncovers before the glory of William Shakespeare, but you cannot convince him that Jack Smith, his neighbor, possesses a spark of the immortal fire. There can be no touch of greatness in Neighbor Smith! He owes his butcher for a month's meat!

Who was this tall, slender, pale-faced youth, with golden hair and a wan smile, who stood forth at the witching hour to confirm a tale that Rumor had murmured to doubters who spiced their skepticism with a pinch of curiosity. Whoever he might be, he satisfied the most ex-

acting eye at that moment, as he calmly awaited the silence that courtesy demanded of his auditors.

Presently Rutger Steendam's clear-cut, well-modulated voice clarified the atmosphere, clogged as it had been with a suppressed buzzing. At first a slight tremor in his tones bore testimony to his recognition of the fact that his pathway for the future ran upward or downward from where he stood. His career lay poised upon the apex of a crisis. The dreams and strivings, the failures and successes, the hopes and fears of his lifetime had become the warp and woof of a mantle in which he had wrapped himself to confront the world and demand therefrom the guerdon that his genius claimed. But in the simplicity of his matter and his manner there was nothing of all this. He recited to his attentive auditors a poem that had blossomed in the sterile soil of East Side life. It was real, it was human, it was almost weirdly musical. Words strange to the ears of many of his hearers nailed a new thought and a haunting picture to the walls of their memories. As the pearl is begotten of an oyster's slow decay, so had genius wrought from the shadows of the slums a gem of poesy. Never until that ecstatic moment had the poet realized the power that he possessed. There is a spirit issuing from a listening throng that communes with a speaker's soul, a psychic force that makes or mars his effort at the outset. If he feels its caress, all things become possible to the true poet. He stands as a medium through which divinity itself appeals to the throbbing hearts of men.

Steendam's voice was lost in a silence that seemed to dread the coming uproar. Then suddenly his awed and fascinated auditors gave vent to their enthusiasm through round after round of genuine applause.

"Tubbs knows a thing or two, after all," remarked Edgerton to the lover of stimulants.

"Isn't he a perfect dear?" asked a young woman of nobody in particular.

"That chap's in the running," asserted Reginald Rowland. "I'll back him, my boy, at any odds!"

"Steendam! Steendam!" muttered Professor Trotter to himself. "I *must* remember his name."

"Wasn't it real nice?" commented the middle-aged matron who had urged Barton not to overwork himself.

"It was just too wonderful for any use!" exclaimed the gushing young woman with fluffy hair and soulful eyes. "I actually can't catch my breath."

"Don't," advised a cynic at her side.

"I wonder how it feels to write a great poem like that?" murmured the beautiful girl who had questioned the Englishman about his "wonderful epigrams."

"A bit too strong, I'm afraid," remarked the portly gentleman who had his wife and daughters with him.

"That kind of thing ought to sell," said a publisher to himself, eying Steendam attentively.

"You've made a great hit, my dear fellow," whispered Tubbs to his poet. "You date from to-night, you know."

Genius had fluttered down to earth again and found something soothing in the chatter of the uninspired. Steendam caught Ethel Caxton's eye, and his triumph grew sweet to his taste. In her nod and smile he read a message, untranslatable but intelligible, for it seemed to be addressed to "the real thing."

Barton, upon whom Steendam's recitation had cast a soothing spell, had listened indifferently to the outbreak of approving exclamations that had followed the poet's triumphant débüt. It was enough for the Englishman that the universe had ceased its circular motion and resolved itself into a crowded drawing-room that remained sedately stationary. It had seemed to Barton that Steendam's verses had, as it were, stuck pins into a capering environment to restore its equilibrium. He wondered vaguely if poetry was an antidote to champagne. Suddenly he recollected that Trotter had made to him a terrifying announcement. He could not recall it. It had had something to do with Elizabeth, but the details had been swept away in the recent cyclone. Barton turned to put a sly question to Trotter. The Face to Face man had disappeared. A moment later the apprehensive Englishman saw that his *bête-noir* had taken Steendam's place facing the gossiping throng. Trotter's appearance was greeted with hand-clapping.

"My good friends," Barton heard him say, "I'm sure that you all will agree with me when I remark that our literary diversions to-night have been most auspiciously inaugurated. There is nothing more flattering to our patriotism than to discover genius at our very doors. But while we gladly present to our new knight the spurs that he has so gloriously won,"—Trotter paused and smiled at Steendam,—"*we are delighted to seize this opportunity to pay our homage to an English lance long in the lists, a champion whose victories have given him a world-wide fame.*"

"Queer way to introduce a Realist," muttered Edgerton audibly.

"I am sure," continued Trotter, "that you will be charmed to learn that Mrs. Barton has kindly consented to read to us a chapter from one of Mr. Barton's novels."

At that instant the bewildered but courageous Englishman mounted to a high altitude of moral grandeur.

"Ah—Professor!" he cried over the heads of the seated audience. "I—ah—must——"

Professor Trotter was equal to the emergency.

"Permit me to say, Mr. Barton," he cried with unctuous cordiality, "that we have fully agreed with you. It shall be the chapter you suggested."

Barton reddened, gasped for breath, and retired precipitately from the gaze of countless eyes turned towards him at that awful crisis. He had dared nobly to make "a scene," and, lo, that diabolical Face to Face man had used his very heroism for an unworthy purpose.

XVI.

THE emotions inspired by "a banquet-hall deserted" depend largely upon the observer's temporary inclinations. If he has a tendency towards melancholia, he will find nothing more depressing than a supper-room after the guests have retired. The skeleton at a feast is the last to leave. It prefers even a disordered and lonely round-table to a dark closet upstairs. Invisible though it may be, the skeleton makes its presence felt. It is suggested by the empty chairs, the half-drained goblets, the cold remnants of savory birds. The room seems to resent its abandonment. The very napkins lie despondent upon the board. A rag, a bone—and a hank of meat! These form the last analysis of midnight revelry, the mocking symbols that only a skeleton can fully comprehend.

That the mood that dominated William F. Barton as he fled from publicity into Mrs. Caxton's dining-room was not attuned to philosophical reflection will be readily understood. The deserted banquet-hall was to him a temporary refuge from prying eyes, and it was nothing more. He had neither the temperament nor the inclination to find in his surroundings the soothing suggestion that all things, pleasant or disagreeable, come to an end at last. If there was a skeleton still lurking in the room, Barton did not see it; his whole attention was concentrated upon the imminent flesh and blood at his back. Trotter was no ghost. Mrs. Barton was still alive, for her husband, standing motionless and erect in the supper-room, could hear her voice as she read to attentive ears a chapter from "A Spinster's Soul."

"It's—ah—criminal," muttered Barton to himself, gazing with feverish eyes at the débris of a feast. "We'll be locked up when the—ah—truth is known."

The silence in the room seemed to chill him to the bone. Then he heard Elizabeth's voice again, and a hot wave of rebellion surged through his veins. A mad project took shape in his mind. If he overthrew the table in front of him the resultant crash would serve as the crack of doom to Mrs. Barton's recital. He recalled a picture in a family Bible, dear to his boyhood, of Samson overturning the pillars of the temple for revenge. Suddenly he found himself endeavoring to cull from memory all that he had ever read concerning

paresis. Again the silence of the supper-room came upon him as a cold wave. Then he heard suppressed laughter behind half-closed doors. The waiters had been getting at the champagne. Unaware of this, Barton found in this subdued merriment something uncanny. A squad of Trotters seemed to be concealed somewhere near at hand, making night hideous over that Face to Face joke. Would it not be well to rush in suddenly upon his treacherous tormentors, strike from the shoulder, like a true Briton, and then make a dash for freedom?

But it would be the act of a coward to desert Elizabeth. If he ran away, Mrs. Barton could hardly escape arrest. Hadn't she filched a famous author's thunder? Wasn't he, William F. Barton, at that very moment a receiver of stolen goods? There were some very nice legal points involved in the affair. Barton found relief for a moment in dwelling upon the unique features of this case of mistaken identity. He had come upon an idea that, from a business man's stand-point, held his attention for a time. It appeared that that unreliable, superfluous portion of the mind, the imagination, might make from airy nothings a tangible piece of property. Barton caught his breath as he reflected that "rubbish" may possess a high market value, recognized and protected by the law. Then hot anger against Elizabeth took full control of him. A round of applause had interrupted her reading at that moment. Some pointed epigram had hit the target and rung the bell. Barton flashed a glance of anger towards the distant door-way. He longed to interrupt that exhibition of fraud and folly by some heroic, devastating demonstration. The possibility of hitting Trotter's diabolical head with a champagne-glass flashed upon him. He even went so far as to raise a goblet from the table, but the trembling of his hand convinced him that his chance of potting the Professor was slight.

To Barton thus glaring in impotent rage at the room in which his wife was engaged in accelerating his career as an impostor came a soft-footed, soft-voiced, sharp-featured youth, who had slipped into the dining-room from the hall without doffing his topcoat. Gliding towards his victim, he placed a hand upon the Englishman's arm and whispered,—

"I've got news for you, my man—bad news, but worth what I ask for it."

Barton gathered himself together with an effort of will, resisted an inclination to bolt at once, and gazed at the intruder haughtily.

"May I ask—ah—who you are, sir?"

"Haven't a card with me," said the young man, smiling mischievously. "But I make no concealment of my real name—Mr. Barton." There was a note of sarcasm in the youth's subdued voice. "I am Charles F. Rollins by birth and baptism, and a reporter for the *Morning Trumpet* by profession."

Barton edged away from his captor and glanced at a line of retreat towards the hall. The reporter clung to his side, politely but persistently.

"Don't go, Mr. Barton," murmured Rollins softly. "I told you I had news for you."

"Damn your—ah—news!" growled Barton, turning pale as a round of applause reached his ears from the drawing-room.

"You'll make that remark with more emphasis when I tell you what I know," commented the reporter. "Now look here, Barton,—or whoever you are,—your little game is played out, but I'm about to grant you a run for your money. In other words, I want you to make to me, and to no one else, a full explanation of this affair, in return for the tip I have it in my power to give you."

Barton stood motionless, gazing anxiously into the shrewd face of his tormentor.

"I don't—ah—quite follow you," muttered the Englishman helplessly. There was something in the bearing of the reporter that had begun to terrify his captive. Barton suspected that Rollins had been making no idle boast, that he was actually in a position to enforce his demand for an explanation. The realization came to the Englishman that, in spite of Elizabeth's recklessness, he had cherished the hope that he and his madcap wife would be permitted by Providence to escape to their hotel without being branded as cheats. But here stood a stubborn youth, armed with a pad and a pencil, the very incarnation of public curiosity.

"How much is it worth to you to—ah—go away?" gasped Barton desperately, Rollins having paid no attention to his last remark.

A gleam of anger flashed in the reporter's glance.

"A novelist, Barton, should know something of human nature. So should a confidence man." Rollins smiled wickedly. Then he went on: "You can't bribe a New York reporter, my boy. He isn't built that way. But, in return for a tip, Barton, you can give me a beat, a scoop, an exclusive chunk of hot stuff."

There was a wild light in Barton's blood-shot eyes as he glanced around the deserted dining-room, seeking vainly for an avenue of escape. He realized wonderingly that he preferred Trotter to Rollins.

"Take it," he murmured hopelessly.

The reporter grinned.

"You'll tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" he asked.

"I have nothing to—ah—conceal," remarked Barton pompously, in what might be called his earlier manner. "Come to the—ah—Waldorf to-morrow, young man, and I—ah—"

"Now or never, old man," murmured Rollins sweetly. "I haven't

time to burn, either. I'll lose the first edition as it is. Now, fire ahead! who are you? Why did you do it? Who's the lady reading to 'em in there? Make a clean breast of it, my boy, and then—skip!"

"You are insulting, sir," exclaimed Barton, losing control of himself. "I—ah—refuse——"

"Oh, no, you don't," persisted the reporter coolly. "You want my tip before you talk, I see. I don't blame you. Well, here it is. A cable message reached the office just before I left there. *William Farquhar Barton, the novelist, died suddenly at Constantinople this afternoon.*"

For the first time in many years Charles F. Rollins received a shock of surprise. Barton looked him calmly in the eyes, and said sternly:

"He deserved to die, sir. It was—ah—retribution."

There came from the drawing-room a roar of acclamation, followed by the noise of many voices.

"But what have you to say, my man?" insisted the reporter, somewhat excitedly. The Englishman seemed to be a new and unknown type of impostor.

"Say?" repeated Barton, glancing apprehensively towards the drawing-room. "Nothing at all, young man. I've never read any of the fellow's—ah—rubbish."

Then there came suddenly to Barton an inspiration, born either of desperation or champagne, or both combined. "I'm going to the—ah—Waldorf. Go in there and tell Mrs. Barton that I'm—ah—waiting for her in the—ah—hall-way. Tell 'em that I'm—ah—ill. Do you follow me?"

"But who the deuce are you?" demanded the reporter, still amazed at the failure of his trump card.

"I'm—ah—William F. Barton, of Birmingham, England," answered the Briton with great dignity. The sound of his own name seemed to strengthen his determination.

"I'll tell you more, sir, as we drive to the—ah—hotel," he added as he turned his back to the reporter and strode towards the hall-way.

A great "scoop" seemed to be slipping from the grip of Charles F. Rollins, but he was too old a hand at the news-gathering game to lose his head at a crisis.

Presently a light-brown topcoat was brushing against black broadcloth as the reporter, indifferent to the sensation he was making, pushed his way towards the congratulatory group that surrounded Mrs. Barton and Rutger Steendam at the farther end of the drawing-room. That Barton would attempt to abscond the reporter was too good a judge of human nature to fear. He was face to face with a mystery, and, as he caught a glimpse of Mrs. Barton's animated, exultant coun-

tenance, he repeated to himself, like a Parisian detective, the cynical phrase, "Cherchez la femme!"

XVII.

MRS. BARTON had been giving to Mrs. Caxton's guests an impressive imitation of a wife proud of her husband's genius. It requires considerable histrionic ability for a wife to do this, under even the most favorable circumstances. Mrs. Barton was seriously handicapped by the fact that Barton's genius had been borrowed for the occasion. In after days Mrs. Barton indulged in the soothing conviction that upon that historic evening she had acted under the influence of hypnotic suggestion, emanating, possibly, from Professor Trotter. There came a time when she was forced to make to herself some explanation of her reckless indifference to the perils surrounding the path she had so daringly pursued. It was a relief to lay the responsibility later upon some external, irresistible impulse. The hypnotic hypothesis is an age-end poultice that heals the blows of conscience. To the erring who keep abreast of contemporary progress it has revealed a simple method for shifting responsibility. A great sinner is simply a very sensitive medium. For centuries the law has been engaged in punishing not the culprits but their victims.

At the very moment at which William F. Barton, the wronged, the innocent, was suffering the torments of the damned, Professor Trotter, stroking his beard and smiling delightedly, was using one ear to listen to the congratulations pouring in upon Mrs. Barton, and the other to note the words of praise showered upon Rutger Steendam. Mrs. Caxton stood beside him, radiant.

"You have made my evening such a success," she was saying gratefully to the well-satisfied Trotter.

"Pure selfishness upon my part, Mrs. Caxton, as you well know," explained, Fame's impressario frankly. "But, after all, perhaps I have made a blunder. Mrs. Barton reads well. Her husband has an impediment in his speech. Maybe I have played my hand from the wrong suit."

"You could not do that, Professor Trotter," asserted his hostess with conviction. "You never hold anything but trumps."

Meanwhile Mrs. Barton, with flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes, was drinking deep of flattery's sparkling vintage.

"I do so envy you," cried a gushing young woman, grasping her hand. "It must be just too sweet to eat breakfast every morning with a genius. What an elevating privilege it is!"

"You brought out so much that I had never found in that chapter before," murmured an elderly club-woman, who knew a little something about everything, from marketing to the Mahabharata.

"That came from putting the emphasis in the right place," remarked a pompous old gentleman, imagining that he had said something wise.

"How *can* you allow him to be so cynical, Mrs. Barton?" questioned a demure little woman earnestly. "He writes just like a man who has had a past." She caught her breath, realizing her temerity.

"Of course, you know," Mrs. Barton managed to say, "that I am in no way responsible for what he writes."

"But your reading showed how thoroughly you appreciated his best points," commented a sad-eyed, bald-headed man, a literary critic by profession. "You have given me new ideas regarding 'A Spinster's Soul.' I'm inclined to believe, madam, that it is Barton's masterpiece."

"Not to be compared with 'Men, Women, and Murder,'" remarked the pompous old gentleman, who was proud of his wisdom. "Don't you agree with me, Mrs. Barton?"

"If I did, sir, I should not confess it," answered the little woman merrily.

"Accept my congratulations, madam," cried the bald-headed critic impressively. "It is a delight to meet a woman who can so courageously keep a secret."

It was a chance shot, but it struck home. Mrs. Barton wondered if the speaker meant to be satirical. The nervous strain that she had undergone suddenly foreclosed its mortgage upon her system. The flush upon her cheeks succumbed to pallor, and the light in her eyes died out. Mrs. Caxton, observant hostess that she was, hurried to Mrs. Barton's side.

"It is very close in here," said Mrs. Caxton, laying a hand upon the Englishwoman's arm and urging her towards the hall. "A little fresh air will revive you, Mrs. Barton. People are so apt to be cruel when they merely mean to be courteous. Do you feel faint?"

"I am much better now," murmured Mrs. Barton, as she stood motionless for a moment near the open door-way at the entrance to the house. Charles F. Rollins, who had been following close upon their heels, joined them at that moment. Mrs. Caxton greeted him with a stony stare.

"I beg pardon," said the reporter apologetically, "but I was to say to you, Mrs. Barton, that Mr. Barton will join you here at once. He is suffering from a slight touch of—of——"

"Of what?" gasped Mrs. Barton in agitation.

"It's nothing serious, I assure you," asserted Rollins cheerfully. "He'll be down directly. He is overjoyed at your success, madam, and is anxious to congratulate you in the carriage."

"He's quite right, my dear," commented Mrs. Caxton in her best

dowager-duchess manner. "I'll send for your wraps, and you can meet Mr. Barton here."

Mrs. Caxton hurried away, and the reporter glanced up the stairway anxiously.

"You have not told me all, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Barton apprehensively. "There is something awful the matter with Mr. Barton. I see it in your face."

"Not with this Mr. Barton," murmured the reporter soothingly. "But there's something awful the matter with the other Mr. Barton, madam."

"What do you mean, sir?" moaned Mrs. Barton, shivering, but moving closer to the exit.

"He's dead—the other Mr. Barton's dead," whispered Rollins.

"Do you mean the—the——" began the agitated woman, but her voice failed her.

"Yes, Mrs. Barton," said the reporter under his breath. "I mean the novelist. He died at Constantinople this morning."

Mrs. Barton had been heroic for hours. At this instant she mounted to the sublime.

"And who are you, sir?" she asked, gazing into the reporter's face with unflinching eyes.

"I am your friend, Mrs. Barton," said Rollins, filled with admiration for the woman's pluck. "I have promised your husband to see you through this scrape, on condition that you tell me the whole story before we reach your hotel. You're safe enough, if Mr. Barton doesn't talk."

"William won't talk," murmured Mrs. Barton musingly. Then she glanced towards the stairway impatiently. "Why does he not come?" she groaned. "Every moment is precious. William is slow, sir, but he is not a fool."

She caught the smile that flitted across the reporter's face.

"Neither a fool nor a knave, sir," she said stubbornly. Again Mrs. Barton became sublime. "And I, sir—I may be both." There was a little catch in her voice, and then her momentary weakness passed. "This is not for publication, sir?"

"On my honor—no," answered Rollins frankly.

"Mr. Barton is slow, sir, but he has a temper. I hope nothing happens to disturb him before we get away. Is he not coming, sir?"

At that instant Mrs. Caxton and Barton, carrying Mrs. Barton's wraps upon his arm, descended the broad staircase. Barton was pale and pompous; Mrs. Caxton grateful and genial. Perhaps she was not altogether sorry to say farewell to a most eccentric lion. As for the lion, his whole being had become an exposed nerve that flight and freedom could alone quiet.

At the moment that found Barton and his hostess at the foot of the staircase, Professor Trotter came upon them by a flank movement from the drawing-room.

"Hoity-toity, Barton," he cried, "going? And without a word to me? Have I not reason for feeling hurt, sir? Scant ceremony, Barton! You must admit, sir, that I have just cause for a word of protest. Permit me, Mrs. Barton."

Trotter had relieved the pale and silent Englishman of his burden, and, with exaggerated courtesy, was assisting Mrs. Barton to don her wraps. Suddenly something in her face, her husband's grim reticence, and the presence of the mysterious Rollins, who hovered near, like a bird of ill-omen, combined to arouse a shapeless, intangible suspicion in the manager's mind.

"What does this sudden departure mean, Barton?" he asked querulously, transfixing his lion with an insistent gaze. On the instant the lion roared.

"It means, sir, that I have submitted too long to your—ah—impertinent domination. It means that I am through forever, sir, with—ah—literature. It means that Mrs. Barton is about to return to our hotel to destroy—ah—that old curmudgeon MacGregor. It means much more than all this, sir. Just—ah—think it over when you get time. When you come to—ah—Birmingham, I hope, sir, that you will let me know before you arrive, sir. Mrs. Barton, my arm. Mrs.—ah—Caxton, I bid you good-night."

Without further ado Barton, with head erect, strode towards the awning-covered passage-way that showed the path to freedom. To his arm clung Mrs. Barton, limp and nerveless, while hot upon their footsteps stalked the reporter, smiling at his thoughts.

"Really, Mrs. Caxton, he's the most eccentric old codger I've ever met," remarked Trotter, gazing at his retreating lion in a dazed way. "He seems to be utterly devoid of savoir-faire. I have known many authors in my time, madam, but never one before who seemed to be everything that his books are not. There's not the slightest suspicion of genius about Barton, unless it lies in his utter indifference to the rest of the world."

"It's very curious," admitted Mrs. Caxton musingly. "I really believe, Professor Trotter, that Mrs. Barton has written every line of his famous novels."

The manager smiled. "You may be right, Mrs. Caxton," he said. "I have sometimes thought that they were a bit too risqué to have been written by a man."

"For which remark I shall never forgive you, Professor Trotter," said Mrs. Caxton, with a smile that belied her words.

ADDENDUM.

THE Annalist of the foregoing authentic account of a hitherto-misunderstood episode in the literary history of New York purchased a copy of the *Evening Moonbeam*, one evening not long ago, thinking to cheat an elevated railroad journey of its monotony. He was rewarded for his foresight. The newsy, well-edited sheet proved to be full of readable items, many of which were evidently founded upon fact. The Annalist, having passed ten enlightening years of his life as a New York journalist, had learned how to peruse a newspaper for amusement, while, at the same time, he sifted the wheat of the truthful from the chaff of the imaginative. For, be it known, Fiction is not the only field upon which Realism and Romance wage their nineteenth-century conflict.

In every issue of a modern newspaper you will find a suggestion of Zola winking at a paragraph that might have been penned by Gautier. A bare statement of fact regarding the mobilization of European troops proves the ocean cable's devotion to Realism, while a description of last night's dance at Sherry's illustrates a reporter's fondness for the romantic school. The statistician and the poet, Gradgrind and Sentimental Tommy, appeal to the public daily through the columns of the press. To the initiated, there is no better proof that both Realism and Romance are, in their seemingly antagonistic ways, essential to the happiness of the race than is offered every afternoon by such products of the press as the *Evening Moonbeam* and its rivals.

The first item that quickened the pulse of the sapient Annalist, as he rolled uptown upon the evening referred to above, ran as follows:

"The story recently published by a morning contemporary of the *Moonbeam*, purporting to be a true and exclusive revelation of the motives that impelled a reputable British merchant to impersonate in this city the late lamented novelist, William Farquhar Barton, proves to have been inaccurate in detail and false in inference. It is probable that all the facts in the case will never come to light, inasmuch as the patrons of literature who were victims of this mysterious hoax are reticent—naturally enough—regarding the data upon which they based their amazing credulity. It is rumored that the Birmingham iron-master, the central figure in the comedy that ensued, was forced unwillingly into a false position. His sudden departure for Montreal after his daring assumption of the rôle of an English author who lay dead at that very time in a distant land has been generally and, it must be admitted, logically attributed to a guilty conscience. It is inconceivable, however, that a man of William F. Barton's standing in the community in which he lives should indulge in a practical joke

for any motive more reprehensible than the craving for temporary amusement. The *Moonbeam* is in a position to state that neither the impostor nor his wife can be justly accused of mercenary incentives. The evidence attainable at this writing goes to show that the English manufacturer was either the victim of circumstances against which he could not prevail, or that he deliberately sought to register a public protest against a class of novels that he considers pernicious. That a different conclusion might be reached in this matter could the whole truth be drawn from unwilling lips must be admitted. The *Moonbeam* suggests that the public suspend judgment in the case until some one of the principals feels inclined to tell the whole story to the press."

The Annalist smiled as he reread this confession of weakness upon the part of a newspaper that had avowed its mystification with somewhat unjournalistic frankness. As the determination entered his mind to enlighten the public, when the time should be ripe, concerning the inner facts of the now-famous "Barton Episode," the Annalist's eyes lighted upon an item that seemed to enlarge the scope of his project. It ran as follows:

"The engagement is announced of Miss Edith Caxton, the younger daughter of Mrs. Archibald Caxton, to Mr. Rutger Steendam, the well-known poet and magazinist. Mrs. Caxton, as the public knows, is the founder of a literary salon that has served to emphasize the fact that New York is indeed America's centre of high pressure in letters. In another column will be found 'An Appreciation' of Rutger Steendam's genius from the pen of Percival Tubbs, editor of the *Monthly Gazette*."

As the Annalist turned to the column devoted to a great editor's eulogy of the poet whose coming he had prophesied and whose success he had assured, the smile upon the face of the ex-journalist broadened to a grin. The reflection had come to him that whether a man be a genius or a fraud, he should carefully protect himself against the flattery of friends.

That very night the Annalist dipped his pen into his ink-well to transcribe for the curious the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning an impostor whose better half was more or less guilty.

LINCOLN

AS AN ANTAGONIST

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

By Colonel Charles Pomeroy Button



THERE are a thousand-odd "Lives of Abraham Lincoln," yet the final word of him is far from having been spoken. My excuse for speaking is that I knew him in a way it was given to few to know him,—while he was under the shaping hammer of events apparently trivial, but really of Titanic consequence.

Personally he was my friend; politically, my antagonist. What was much more important, he was the head and front of antagonism to the man whom of all men I served and followed,—my kinsman, Stephen Arnold Douglas. It was as Douglas's confidential mouth-piece I came to know Mr. Lincoln. In 1855, when I was but little past my majority, Judge Douglas summoned me to Illinois. Without vanity, I think I may say he gave to me more nearly his full confidence, the whole inner workings of his mind, than to any other human being. In a way the trust was a necessity,—he was too wise, too shrewd, too able a strategist ever to put on paper important political secrets.

He had established as his personal organ the *Chicago Times* newspaper. His money and that of his friends for years sustained it. Even thus early, his doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty had produced within his own party the rumble of coming earthquake. But he was confident the rumbling would die away, and bent every energy towards so shaping State politics as to insure that the Illinois delegates to the next Democratic National Convention should all be his personal friends and henchmen, pledged to act wholly according to the will of their chairman, Colonel William A. Richardson, of Quincy. District and Congressional Conventions were to go through the form of instructing these delegates for Douglas. It was understood, however, that Colonel Richardson, who was to keep in hourly communication with the Judge, would swing the delegation strictly according to his orders—either hold it for him or throw its strength wherever he might direct.

All this was under the cards when I set forth, ostensibly to canvass the State "in the interest of the *Chicago Times*." Really my business

was to go into every doubtful district and find out who were with him in his Squatter Sovereignty promulgation; also whether they had the confidence of the public, or if the leaders of public opinion had been alienated by his latest departure. Incidentally I was to look after local patronage, particularly post-offices. The Pierce Administration, then in power, gave Douglas a free hand in his own State. Civil-Service rules were undreamed of then—besides, it was not so long since William L. Marcy had formulated his famous saying, or rather adaptation of old Roman military law, "To the victor belong the spoils of war."

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Armed with a general letter of introduction and a list of names, I set forth. The names were all marked—with one X for doubtful, two for trustworthy. Before long I found myself in Springfield, then Mr. Lincoln's home. The man I had to see there first was a leading store-keeper, long a resident of the town. When business was out of the way, I asked if he thought it would be in bad taste for me to call upon Mr. Lincoln, who was already recognized as the only man of any party able to dispute Douglas's primacy in the State. "Go, by all means," said he; "Judge Douglas has no better friends anywhere than both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. I am sure the Judge will be glad to have you go—tell the Judge I said so and advised it." After a minute's pause he added: "The fact is, Douglas knows Lincoln has been badly used in that Senate matter. He was deserted by his own party for Lyman Trumbull, a renegade Democrat, who didn't control half a dozen votes. If only Lincoln had held out,—as I advised him to do, at the direct instance of Judge Douglas,—he would to-day be in the Senate. Douglas likes him, and would much rather have had him, a consistent Old-Line Whig as colleague, than this turncoat, who was first Whig, then Democrat, then Republican, changing with the political complexion of the State for the sake of holding office. At the election we Democrats were somewhat up a tree. We had nobody upon whom we could unite with any hope of success. Trumbull was a sort of dark horse. If we had dreamed he was to be sprung on us, half a dozen of us would have found it convenient to go out and leave Lincoln a clean majority of members present and voting. Later it was only his peremptory withdrawal that kept us from going over to him in a body. He knows all about it now—I dare say the knowledge hurts, for he is keenly ambitious. But he complains of precious few things; in his own words, 'There's never any use in crying over spilt milk.' At present, I know to a certainty, Lincoln has no Presidential aspirations. He does, however, cherish still a hope of the Senate. To be exact, he wants to succeed Judge

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Douglas. If the Judge wins this Cincinnati nomination, of course he must resign, and I am morally certain Lincoln will fill the vacancy."

That night I knocked at Mr. Lincoln's door. He himself came to open it, and after a friendly greeting ushered me into the family sitting-room. Mrs. Lincoln was there, reading aloud to her son Robert, then a stout lad of ten or twelve. Mr. Lincoln's first words were, "As a *Times* man, you must know Judge Douglas personally—the paper is said to be his organ." Then with a smile, half quizzical, half kindly, "I read it every morning to find out what tune it plays for the day." In reply I handed him my letter. After a glance at it he said to his wife, who was on the point of leaving the room, "Mary, this is Mr. Button, a relative of Judge Douglas, as well as a newspaper man."

"We are always glad to meet the friends of Judge Douglas," Mrs. Lincoln said, shaking hands most cordially. Then she went out, and after an interval of desultory chat we came to the root of the matter. At this late day, when almost all the actors in those stirring scenes have joined the majority, I feel there is no betrayal of confidence in repeating what was at the time most confidential. For the most part I talked. Mr. Lincoln listened attentively with cordial interest, and answered without hesitation or equivocation the questions put to him. While I cannot vouch for exact words, I can for the substance of what was said. In effect, I asked if he believed what the *Democrat* (Long John Wentworth's paper) was saying,—namely, that in the removal of postmasters then going on his—Mr. Lincoln's—friends were especially selected for the axe? If he did so believe, the charges were untrue. I added that, so far as my knowledge went, all the men removed were Democrats, appointees of Franklin Pierce, recommended to him by Democratic Congressmen, and removed for due cause. No Whig hold-overs had so far been molested. By way of clinching what I had said I showed him a list of postmasters holding over in the State, a list made out by Postmaster-General Campbell. "Judge Douglas," I added, "has cautioned me to make no mistakes in the matter of recommending changes. If you see that I have made such, pray indicate them; they shall at once be rectified."

Mr. Lincoln glanced at the list. "I do not see that you have made any," he said; then jocularly, "Your wing of the party is entitled to a share of the fowl—and I think Douglas is almost certain to get the liver."

This was a sly hit at the rooster, then, as now, the Democratic emblem, which either crowed triumph in the columns of the local press, or appeared, spurs up, cold and stark, when our opponents had snowed us under. As I smiled over the conceit, Mr. Lincoln went on seriously, his eyes thoughtful but full of kindness: "Judge Douglas

is by nature magnanimous. I never have known him to do a mean act—I hardly look for him to begin now. As to my friends, have you thought that I may gain some new ones by this wholesale decapitation? Certainly no old one will accept office under the present Administration. If he does, Douglas may have him and welcome. I see in your list the names of some of my firmest friends. I say to you and to them, that if they prostitute or take advantage of their official position by efforts to injure Judge Douglas, by soliciting subscriptions for Wentworth's paper, or in any other underhand way, their heads ought to come off—and come off quickly. I too would recommend it. As to our allies in this fight, we shall do all we can to co-operate in every way with their efforts to overthrow Douglas and this monumental delusion of his. We shall fight him and his associates in all honorable ways. What we don't propose to do, is to help those who have not helped us get loaves and fishes out of the Democratic basket."

This first Lincoln encounter was by no means the last. I found him in the course of a dozen interviews exactly the same, always kind, always shrewdly humorous, and full of broadly sympathetic human comprehension. My work sent me here and there and brought me many notable acquaintances. One of the most interesting, in view of later developments, was Judge Bryan, of Salem, father of that William Jennings Bryan with whom the American public has of late become reasonably familiar. On my list as one of the faithful, he, of course, received me warmly, forwarded my mission in every way possible, and ended by asking me to his house. There my main impression was that he and his wife were most admirably matched. Mrs. Bryan, it turned out, though a good Democrat and warm partisan of Douglas, was a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln. She had met both men socially—I think had entertained both in her own home—and was eager for news of them, which I was as happy to give. It was while in Salem that I received a letter from Judge Douglas, still one of my most treasured possessions, saying, "I have attended to your recommendations regarding the Postmaster at Salem. Be sure to make no mistakes, as I shall act at once."

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It is beginning to be accepted that Abraham Lincoln was a master politician. Very much of that mastery he owed to lessons received at the hands of Douglas. Douglas beat him out of a Senatorship when the Republican candidates for Governor had swept the State. It is perhaps worth while to go a little into detail as to how that result was brought about. It was due wholly to foresight and organization—the organization Douglas had perfected for the benefit of his Presi-

dential aspirations. Foiled of the Presidency, he knew every doubtful district of his own bailiwick, and set to work to carry it by help of local strength. Almost everywhere the young men were hot for him—they even organized the Young Democracy, pledged to do or die for him. Perhaps our opponents were not so far wrong in saying the Young Democracy would vote as a unit for a yellow dog that wore Douglas's collar. Still, there were not enough of them. Here is a sample of how their strength was made to avail. In a very close district* there lived a certain Judge Roosevelt—an uncle, I think, of Theodore Roosevelt. He was an Independent with slight Democratic leanings, easily the most popular man in his county, and thought to be quite beyond the seductions of office. Nobody doubted that he could have any office within the gift of his fellow-citizens. Douglas decided that he should be a member of the House of Representatives, and sent me into the district to pull the wires.† It was a pretty bit of political strategy. First, I got the Independents to break the ice with the Judge. Of course, he pooh-poohed them, but the ice was broken just the same. Next, there was some talk of fusion, good government, citizens' ticket, and all that sort of thing. Then, the Young Democrats, fully persuaded that he would take no party's nomination, went at him with a rush—and were amazed to find him their candidate. The thing to do was to pull off their coats and elect him. They did it, and made Douglas's majority on joint ballot eight in place of seven.

Lincoln, looking on, was a most apt pupil. So was Long John Wentworth, of whom I must say, after a life devoted to playing the game of politics, that he came to be the shrewdest, longest-headed, longest-sighted political manager I have ever known. Douglas in playing politics was, like Lincoln, hampered by two things, conscience and statesmanship, which never in the least trouble your campaign manager pure and simple. Lincoln and Douglas were further alike in that each believed devoutly in his own destiny. "Buchanan is old—I am young enough to wait," Douglas said when the Cincinnati convention had dashed his dearest hopes. Before that he had said to me, while reading a life of Napoleon: "If I had not gone into political life, I might have made some figure as a military man. A political campaign should be planned and thought out even more carefully than a battle."

Political strategy was his delight. Once while we were campaigning together in Egypt—the cant name of Southern Illinois—he was seized with the ailment that finally ended his life. Gout of the

* The Senator from that district held over.

† Douglas intended him for Speaker if elected.

stomach is no joke, but somehow he managed to reach the house of his good friend, Dr. Read, of Terre Haute, Indiana. There he lay for days between life and death. It is pleasant to record that the very first letter of inquiry and regret came to him from Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. It was one of the very few which the Doctor permitted him to see. Books, politics, everything outside, indeed, were for a while forbidden. By and by, when he grew stronger, he said to us one day: "It is incomprehensible that this city always elects Republican officers. Give me a map of it, Doctor. I want to show you the way to win."

The Doctor put him off, but he persisted. Finally he got the map, studied it carefully along with certain statistics of voting, then planned a campaign which, it may be worth while to record, resulted next spring in the election of a Democratic Mayor. As Judge Douglas had predicted, the campaign cost some money. It was not, however, corruptly spent. From the depths of most intimate personal knowledge I can affirm that neither Douglas nor Lincoln ever spent a dollar in elections otherwise than legitimately. More, I do not believe that either of these two great men could have brought himself to accept a purchased success.

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When the Cincinnati convention had passed into history Judge Douglas said to me, "Charley, I think you had better look in on those fellows at Philadelphia." He knew and I knew, what very few others even dreamed, that Mr. Lincoln aspired to be the Republican nominee for Vice-President. The leaves he had taken out of Douglas's political book had helped him to make sure of his own delegation. To a man they were his personal friends and ready to stand by him to the last ditch. He was himself a delegate. I thought then, and think still, that his choice for a Presidential candidate was some Old-Line Whig. The new-born Republican party was a scarce-welded agglomeration of Free-Soil Men, Barn-Burners, dissatisfied Democrats,—mainly dissatisfied on the issue of slavery,—Old-Line Whigs, and Americans, or Know-Nothings. It was a branch of the Know-Nothings, indeed, which first nominated the Pathfinder, John Charles Fremont, and asked for him Republican endorsement. The nomination swept the country so like wild-fire that the Republicans perforce endorsed it. In all my life I recall nothing like the enthusiasm for Fremont. Mr. Lincoln said, and I agree with him, that had the election come off within a week of the convention, the Wide-Awake campaign would have swept the country, obliterating in the North and West both the old parties.

I am, however, anticipating. Since the Pathfinder's nomination was so much a foregone conclusion, there was naturally a keen interest in the convention as to who should be his running mate. It was then the unwritten law of conventions that in the informal cau-

cusssing which precedes the formal one a candidate's name must be mentioned first by somebody outside his own State delegation. The Illinois delegation was uninstructed—Lincoln had seen to that; really, he held it in the hollow of his hand. I was sitting in the gallery just above it, when a delegate whom I did not know, and whose State and name I have never since heard, got up and said in a most apologetic way, as though truly ashamed to name before the convention a man so obscure, that he presented, by request, the name of Abraham Lincoln, adding, "All I know of him is that he is a right-down good fellow and was an Old-Line Whig."

I looked for Mr. Lincoln, but could not see him. Most likely he had gone out before the nominating speeches. I noted, however, great excitement among the Illinois delegates. Norman B. Judd and John M. Palmer seemed especially discomposed. After a whispered conference, one of the Illinois men got up, and in a ringing speech told the convention something about Abraham Lincoln, "An honest man, the idol of Illinois, best loved where best known, and sure of his State."

"Can he fight?" a delegate shouted. Like a flash the answer went back: "Judge for yourself. He is a Kentuckian." The convention rose at the answer and cheered as though it would raise the roof. When voting began, to the amazement of even his friends, Lincoln was second in the poll. Dayton alone led him, and Lincoln at once instructed his supporters to withdraw his name and cast their votes for Dayton. The result is history. Dayton, nominated on the first formal ballot, was soundly beaten, along with the Pathfinder, the next November. Thus it will be seen that Mr. Lincoln had a narrow escape from being laid on the shelf consecrated to unsuccessful Vice-Presidential candidates. I have it on good authority that he said when he saw the election returns: "Well, after all, it is sometimes better to be a living dog than a dead lion."

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He had another saying, or rather story, which was often bandied back and forth betwixt him and Judge Douglas. Either, when some darling scheme had gone amiss, was apt to say he "felt like the boy who stubbed his toe and said 'It hurt too bad to laugh over, and he was too nigh a man to cry over it.'"

Before leaving the Philadelphia convention matter I wish to say that I often wondered how the apologetic delegate fared at Mr. Lincoln's hands in his hour of triumph. I think Lincoln spoke truth in saying he had neither friends to reward nor enemies to punish, but, after all, he was very human, keenly sensitive to slights. Judge Douglas said to me once when the talk had fallen on Henry Clay: "How

Lincoln admires and hates that man! Do you know the reason? It is this: Back in the old Whig days Lincoln, who had served his party mightily well in the State and out of it, and who was known as a rising man, went to Kentucky on a visit. While there he called on Clay—and was beautifully snubbed. He has never forgotten it—he never will forget. Yet the snub made not the least difference in his party loyalty. When Clay was running for President Lincoln worked for him as hard as the next man; but he did not try to help him win the nomination—that would have been too much to expect.”

Loss of the stakes for which they had played—Presidential and Vice-Presidential nominations—naturally brought Lincoln and Douglas into keener rivalry than ever. This time the prize was the Senatorship. It is safe to say that had Lincoln won it the course of history and the map of these United States might both have been signally changed. He should certainly have won. Against anybody but Douglas he would certainly have done it. Not only was his party in a clear numerical majority, but Douglas had by this time broken entirely with the Buchanan Administration and had the whole strength of Federal patronage arrayed against him. I do not think it is wholly an elderly man's partiality for his own times which makes me think there were truly giants in those days, and the chiefest of them my own beloved “Little Giant.” Reasonable familiarity with present-day great men warrants my saying that they lose by contrast with the public men of the Fifties. The morale of public life has also almost wholly changed. I fear there is but too much justice in the charge that nowadays morale spells millions.

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It was far otherwise in the era of the Great Debate, the most momentous speaking duel ever fought upon our continent. It made Lincoln a national figure, a possible President, and bred in Douglas and his friends the supreme self-confidence that in the end disrupted Democracy and set the Civil War forward on the calendar by a full generation. On the face of things the Republicans had a walk-over. They were correspondingly jubilant, but Mr. Lincoln himself did not share their overconfidence. He knew, better than any other man alive, whom he had to fight and what a fight it would be. Still, however fierce the battle, he had no thought of shirking it. He challenged Douglas to go with him to the people, the plain people, present his case to them, and leave them to judge whose case was the better. Douglas accepted the challenge gladly. I think he had a subtle and peculiar pleasure in crossing swords with this political enemy, who was also his close friend. After some preliminary speech-making at partisan gatherings it was agreed that the two should meet at the Tremont House, Chicago, and talk over informally the plan of a joint campaign.

Fate allotted that I should make a third at that informal meeting, the only person present besides the two great principals. I was then a customs inspector in the Chicago Custom-House, and happened to be in Judge Douglas's parlor when Mr. Lincoln and his friends came in. A number of other Democrats were there likewise—in fact, the gathering had somewhat the appearance of a ward caucus; but, as if by common consent, Democrats and Republicans made haste to bow themselves away. I went with the rest, but just outside the door happened to remember a batch of letters Judge Douglas had asked me to post for him, so went back. As Douglas caught sight of me he said, "Charley, please open a window, the smoke here is almost stifling."

While I was lowering it Mr. Lincoln said jocularly, "Judge, do you think it is quite safe—this leaving us alone together?" Douglas laughed and answered, "Perhaps not." Still I hardly knew whether to go or stay. Mr. Lincoln, I think, saw my embarrassment. He handed me a fresh copy of the *Democrat*, asking, "Have you seen what Long John has to say?"

In the ambush of the paper from the room's far end I looked at and listened to a conference truly informal. Douglas set the ball rolling. "I believe, Mr. Lincoln," he said, "it is your idea that we speak jointly in every Congressional district of the State?"

"Yes," said Mr. Lincoln, "that is my idea. I think, Judge, we had better leave details to our friends. I will name one, you one; we leave everything to them, and agree that in case of disagreement they shall choose an umpire; but if the umpire's decision is not satisfactory to both, why, we will meet privately and agree to disagree, though I don't in the least anticipate that there will be disagreement."

"Nor I," said Douglas. "What you propose is entirely satisfactory. As my friend, I name Thomas L. Harris."

"And I Norman B. Judd," said Mr. Lincoln.

It was a queer choice, but a master move on Lincoln's part. Norman B. Judd was the man who of all others had defeated him for the Senate. With a handful of supporters he had caused the dead-lock which eventuated in Lincoln's withdrawal. To be thus chosen placated him and made him Lincoln's firm friend. Let it be said of him further that he was among the sharpest political manipulators of his time. Lincoln's nomination to the Presidency was due to him more than to any other man. Indeed, he was for years one of Lincoln's firmest, most devoted, and least scrupulous adherents.

"Well, that ends the matter. Let's have a drink on it," Judge Douglas said, moving towards the sideboard and setting out two bottles. "I believe you take old Bourbon."

"Not with Ike Cook's Otard, vintage of 1808, before me," Mr. Lincoln said, reaching for the other bottle. A pony each sufficed the

two statesmen; then Judge Douglas lit a Principe and offered one to Mr. Lincoln, which I think that gentleman declined. Puffing at his own, Douglas said, "It seems to me we had as well call back our friends—there is nothing more that needs to be said on this subject."

By way of answer Lincoln merely nodded. With the nod ended all reference to a momentous political event.



THE APPLE-BARREL

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

IT stood in the cellar low and dim,
 Where the cobwebs swept and swayed,
 Holding the store from bough and limb
 At the feet of autumn laid.
 And oft, when the days were short and drear
 And the north wind shrieked and roared,
 We children sought in the corner, here,
 And drew on the toothsome hoard.
 For thus through the long, long winter-time
 It answered our every call
 With wine of the summer's golden prime
 Sealed by the hand of fall.
 The best there was of the earth and air,
 Of rain and sun and breeze,
 Changed to a pippin sweet and rare
 By the art of the faithful trees.
 A wonderful barrel was this, had we
 Its message but rightly heard,
 Filled with the tales of wind and bee,
 Of cricket and moth and bird;
 Rife with the bliss of the fragrant June
 When skies were soft and blue;
 Thronged with the dreams of a harvest moon
 O'er fields drenched deep with dew.
 Oh homely barrel, I'd fain essay
 Your marvellous skill again;
 Take me back to the past, I pray,
 As willingly now as then;—
 Back to the tender morns and eves,
 The noontides warm and still,
 The fleecy clouds and the spangled leaves
 Of the orchard over the hill.

SMITH OF "PENNSYLVANIA"

By Francis Churchill Williams



SECOND IN THE SERIES OF COLLEGE TALES

HE came to the University distinguished by his lack of distinction. In the ruck of freshmen who streamed from the four quarters of the globe through the gaps in the clipped hedge into College Hall he was a unit, nothing more. His name was William Smith, and his father's name William Smith, of a place up in the State which one heard of only to forget. He was below middle height, sparsely built, with sandy hair and skin and blue eyes that were—cheerful.

His entrance into College Hall was neither timid nor pretentious. Therefore he escaped the shocking threats delivered at those freshmen whose faces wore a sickly smile intended to be propitiatory, and was immune from the withering remarks levelled at those of arrogant mien or whose serious thoughts made them blind to the gentlemen lounging about them in a double row and making plain that, to their minds, this was the most entertaining circus that had come to town for some time. William Smith, knowing no one, went where he was told to go and did what he was bid—at first. When he had decided which commands were to be resisted, which ignored, and which obeyed, William Smith changed from a nobody to an entity, and became a leader in his class.

This transformation, in its inception, was the more strange because William Smith had neither a big fist, a big voice, nor more than a fair share of brains. Nevertheless, it was he who first avenged the freshman whose book-bag a knot of sophomores had seen fit to seize; it was he who, in those early days, shinned up the flag-pole topping College Hall, and fastened at the peak a flag bearing his class insignia. It was he too who directed the organization of his class, and dared to defy the sophomore prohibition of canes among freshmen; and it was he who, in February, with a luck that was providential—for his class—secured the "third lowest honor," and thereby became entitled to the proud distinction of "bowl man."

Now the "bowl man" at Pennsylvania shares with the "bowl"—a dish made of dove-tailed pieces of hard wood, decorated with

class and society emblems, and warranted to stand rough usage—the doubtful honor of being the bone of contention between two bodies of young men. One of these bodies is of sophomores, who are intent on placing the bowl man in the bowl without allowing the bowl to be smashed; the other is composed of freshmen, who are determined to keep the bowl man apart from the bowl, and to crack the bowl into as many small bits as may be. The effect of all this on the bowl is trifling; the effect on the bowl man is dismemberment at the worst, the tortures of the inquisitorial rack at the least.

William Smith went into the fight, nerved by a desire to provide the excuse for his class whipping the sophomores, and guarded by a score of young men whose eyes flashed fire. From these last he was soon borne away and stood on his head, and for a period thereafter almost believed that he had become a centipede, and that countless limbs were being torn from him. Then he was suddenly crushed to earth, and for half an hour lay on his stomach under fifty men, while those outside hunted for him.

When next William Smith began to take notice of things he was in a clean, white cot where the air was charged with iodoform, and he wondered until he looked through a long window by his bedside. A hundred yards away he could see a big, greenish stone building, clad with vines, which he recognized as College Hall; and nearer he saw a building of gray stone which he knew was Houston Hall, and he identified the rows of poplars which lined the pebbled drive and the clang of the trolley-car gong on Spruce Street. Recollection of a bowl fight came to him, and he made guesses as to who had won it.

But when he got out of the University Hospital and found that neither side had won that memorable fight, he decided that something must have been lacking in his individual efforts, and for the purpose of better fitting himself for such efforts began to haunt the gymnasium and there build up his strength. The apparatus became warm with his grasp, and he was quite proud of his accomplishments until that day when a slender, smooth-faced, youngish-looking man sauntered up and asked him something about the machine which registered the strength of the back and legs. William Smith explained, and the youngish-looking man followed instructions. He did right well too, for he lifted about three hundred pounds more than William Smith had done. When the other had gone William Smith inquired the cause of the snicker among those who looked on, and a junior was good enough to tell him. He said, "That pupil of yours is called Professor Bailey—in the class-room. He was champion light-weight wrestler and all-around strong man at Harvard—five years ago."

The incident did William Smith good; it was a big step in his college education, which was progressing rapidly. To be sure, in

the class-room he remained an average man, and, even in the number of regulations he broke, was not far behind the leaders. But there were other things than these, and, for freshmen, William Smith became an inspiration, if not an oracle. His clay-colored head and his high-pitched, earnest voice were the signals for prompt attention at the meetings of his class.

Pomp, who had consented to occupy the office of college janitor for years unnumbered and whose hair was only a shade blacker than his face, christened William Smith "De Crank." Pomp had privileges other than those of answering the big gong in the hall and wearing a black ribbon and a huge silver watch, and these privileges were patent in his speech. "D' y' tink I'se a fool?" was his favorite retort to freshmen who tried their blandishments upon him. But even his throaty chuckle had less of scorn in it when William Smith was in question. There was something in that confident voice and the assurance of those cheerful blue eyes that made refusal of Smith's requests impossible.

So by the end of freshman year William Smith had established himself in college and was pretty well known. He took all of his humiliations with philosophy, that was one thing. If he was disappointed that he could get nothing better than a substitute's place on the freshman crew in the spring, he did not show it, but went to bed earlier than did the rest of the men, and pulled Ellis Ward, the trainer, about in the two-oared gig patiently, and ran all sorts of errands, and did not complain. In June he sang conscientiously but dreadfully out of tune in the chorus of the "Mask and Wig" extravaganza at the Broad-Street Theatre and labored to make his step as light as those of his fellow dancers of more experience or gifts; and he laughed as hard as any at the breaks he made.

It was as a sophomore that William Smith first recognized that, after all, the class was but a unit of the University. This came to him earlier than to most others because he was a pioneer and an executive by temperament; and once he understood the demands which the University had upon him, he planned only how his class might contribute to the good of Pennsylvania and how he might aid in the work personally. To this end he offered himself as a victim on the "scrub" against the onslaughts of the University foot-ball squad, and was pace-maker on the track for better men, day after day, though he hadn't a ghost of a chance for a place on the team, and knew it. He too led the cheering at games, and labored with "Meds" and "Dentals" and "Horse Doctors" to try for the various teams.

But he never wore the University's colors as its representative on the field.

He would work as hard as the most successful of them; he limped around and was knocked down in practice. When the day of the actual contest came the outward tribute to his zeal was six sweaters, which he wore one over the other, or carried on his shoulders as he sat at the edge of field, or hung over the rail of a tug which kept as close as regulations permitted to the eight flashing blades ahead.

Away down in his heart, now and then, there was an ache which his optimism and intense admiration of Pennsylvania did not quite balm. But no one would ever have guessed this from his face or words. At first they twitted him about his non-success, and called him "Side Lines" and "Chopping Block" and "Forlorn Hope," pleasantries at which he would laugh shortly and his eyes kindle.

"All right," he would answer; "put on a suit and come out! I'll show you how we play at Pennsylvania! That's *your* college, you know!"

The retort made some of the idlers wince; it passed completely over the heads of others. But gradually it sank into the minds of even the most trifling of these that William Smith was doing a good deal for Pennsylvania, though he didn't get a medal.

Then, one day, some one indicated William Smith to an outsider, and was asked who Smith was. Whereupon he exclaimed:

"Smith! Smith! Why, surely you've heard of Smith?"

The listener laughed. "I've heard of a good many of them."

"But not of one like ours," returned the other man. "*This* is Smith of 'Pennsylvania'!"

"Smith of 'Pennsylvania.'" So nicknamed William Smith remained. When he first heard of it Smith remarked, "Another horse on me, I suppose," but he was pleased immensely when he found that the appellation was adopted by common consent, and that no satire underlay it. When it first appeared in print, in *The Pennsylvanian*, he cut out the reference and put it away. He was shamefaced, but there was a queer little thrill at his heart. Perhaps he did not realize until this crumb of gratitude was offered him just how hungry he was for the recognition that others got, but which was always out of his reach. Smith of "Pennsylvania" had not the consolation of conceit, and so, even with a wide acquaintance, he indulged in some pondering in secret.

This habit was largely responsible for his friendship with Dick Lambert. Lambert had entered the University in Smith's junior year. His kind is to be found in almost every freshman class, but rarely, if ever, in a sophomore class. They have an effective way in college of sweetening what are colloquially known as "Sour Balls." And the object of this system, though he may feign to ignore the sugared satire, loses his acidity in the end, nine times out of ten. In Richard Lam-

bert's case, however, the treatment he got from those whose advances he rebuffed only made him more morose and solitary. If he had been handled more delicately—— But the college man has small faith in delicate handling. So Lambert came to be regarded a good deal as is a surly dog, and by his sophomore year was let severely alone.

Smith had heard of Lambert and had seen him, as he did a hundred other men without knowing much about them. Then, one day in the early autumn, while sitting in the Library at a table near one of the alcoves, he overheard the low-toned conversation of two men back of him.

"Ask Lambert in? Not on your life," said one. "You'd get no thanks from him, and the other men 'd raise a howl. Nobody wants him, and it serves him right."

"He's pretty well queered himself, that's so," rejoined the other man. "And yet, perhaps, if one knew him——"

"Who'd try to—any more? He's too ugly. He hasn't got a friend in the University, it's my opinion. He lives by himself, over on Chestnut Street, and nobody's been in his room even, so far as I know. What he came here for is a mystery."

Smith looked at the last speaker. It was Jim Price, a good fellow. Something made Smith speak up. "Aren't you rather hard on Lambert?" he remarked. "I overheard what you said."

"Everybody says the same thing," answered Price. "Lambert's no good. Try him and see."

"I've a mind to," said Smith slowly. "You fellows have gone at him in the wrong way."

"I guess not," returned Price. With his companion, he got up and strolled away.

Smith returned to his book, and a minute later someone spoke to him. He looked up. It was Lambert.

He was short and stockily built, with pale skin and dark hair. His brows were heavy, and something pulled perpetually at the corners of his mouth. But just now his eyes had light in them and a smile had dispossessed the customary scowl.

"I was in that alcove back of you," he explained. "I heard what was said. I'm much obliged to you." He held out his hand.

Smith grasped it. He was red. "I didn't say anything much—but—what I said I—meant," he replied. Then, after an awkward pause, "I've got to go over to my rooms now. Won't you come and—smoke a pipe with me?"

"I can't—just now," Lambert replied quickly.

"Why not?" And when Lambert's face began to harden with suspicion, "Come over to-night, then. I'll be alone. You know where I am: 'Smith'—one hundred and twelve."

Lambert hesitated. But Smith's frank eyes and something that tugged at his own heart made him say, "All right, I'll come if you'll be alone." With a nod he walked away.

But that evening he came into Smith's rooms. Smith occupied with Harvey Collis, a senior, a suite of three rooms on the ground floor, on the north side of the Triangle, a few doors above where now stands Memorial Gate with its vaulted arches and domes. From the back windows one could look up and down Woodland Avenue. In front the deep-set bow-window opened on the shaven sward of the Triangle, diamonded with walks. To-night the windows of the three stories of the dormitories opposite winked in the light of the lamps which burned above every entrance, and shadows played about the low-arched doorways, set in stone, and chased over the quaint fronts of the buildings with their gables and pitched roofs.

The interior of the rooms made Lambert stand and gaze for a moment in silent wonder, while Smith was urging him to come right in. The broad bench that almost filled the window recess was piled thickly with cushions; flames danced in the brick fire-place and threw ruddy lights on the rugs, the big lounging-chairs, the book-cases, and the broad table, with its litter of books and papers and odds and ends. Everywhere on the walls were banners, a few pictures, college trophies, and photographs. Lambert knew that these must be souvenirs of three years in college. He contrasted it with his own inhospitable room in the Chestnut Street boarding-house, and the idea which lately had been growing upon him was deepened. College life had little meaning for him. It was his own fault too—partly.

Smith, watching him, guessed a part of what was passing in his mind. When he had Lambert in a big chair by the fire he offered him a pipe. But Lambert did not smoke, and, cheerful and tactful as his host was, he found himself hard pressed by the other's moodiness and brief replies. But that only made him redouble his efforts, and gradually his geniality, coupled with the crackling fire, thawed out Lambert's reserve, and they were talking more easily.

When Lambert left that night Smith had learned that he was right in his conjecture as to the reason of Lambert's unpopularity. The rest had gone at him in the wrong way. Lambert was sensitive, and, despite his forbidding manner, was quicker to see a taunt than a rough-and-ready invitation to friendship in the greetings they had given him. Lambert had disclosed enough to show that he was fairly starving for companionship.

Lambert's visit that night was only the beginning. Smith called on him a few days later, and what he did not see in the other's room opened his heart wide. When Commencement came round Lambert and he understood each other. And the next autumn, Collis having

left college, they took Smith's old rooms together. They got along capitally, too—by themselves. But after a dozen ineffectual efforts to make Lambert popular with the rest of the men, Smith gave up the attempt. It was not possible to coax Lambert to meet them half way, and more than half way the others would not go. "Smith and his Wife" they called the two. "And Smith's hen-pecked like the devil," they would add. They alluded to Smith's self-imposed efforts to "civilize" Lambert as "The Taming of the Shrew," or "Why Smith Left Home," cheap witticisms which Smith laughed at and tried to keep from Lambert. But Lambert heard of them, and Smith had hard work to persuade him not to change his quarters at once.

Smith was particularly happy this autumn, for, while it was his last year in the University, it seemed likely that it would bring to him one of the things for which he had so longed. In brief, when the foot-ball season opened Smith was the man who, from long experience on the foot-ball field, was considered the most promising candidate for the position of quarter-back on the University eleven. In his heart Smith revelled in delight over this, and in the letters which he wrote to a certain girl in the country town from which he came he unconsciously voiced enough of his joy to convince her that, of all the honors conferred by Pennsylvania on her faithful sons, none was to be compared with that which had come to Smith.

Nor was there any jealousy of Smith's happiness. Every fellow who knew him said the same thing: "I'm glad Smith of 'Pennsylvania' has that place, for he certainly deserves it; but——"

Smith himself supplied the words unspoken in this exception. "I'm not fast enough for quarter-back, and I can't work up speed," he would say, and smile. But it was a sorry smile, for he told the exact truth about himself, and everybody knew it. Steady, alert, hard-working, clear-headed, and plucky, he could not travel over the ground fast enough or pass the ball quick enough to be a first-class quarter-back. He was the weak spot in an otherwise strong eleven. Moreover, his weakness was as inevitable as was the lack of a better man to take his place.

An early game of the season—it was with one of the smaller colleges—extinguished what lingering hopes Smith may have had. Pennsylvania won the game, but its play was lamentably loose, and Smith knew, as did the rest, that his slowness was responsible for this.

That evening, as soon as Woolston, the coach, had finished his "lecture" to the men, Smith left the training-quarters and went to his own room. He was sore in body from the desperate plunges he had made again and again that afternoon to retrieve blunders that had resulted from his slowness, but he was sorer in heart from a realization of his weakness. The words with which the men tried to com-

fort him cut him. It seemed to him that they were pitying him, and he could not stand pity.

Lambert was busy on a problem in mathematics—mathematics was a fad of his—when Smith came into the study, and only said "Hello!" in an abstracted voice. But, presently, when Smith passed into his bedroom and stayed there, Lambert got up and followed him.

"I saw you play to-day," he said. "And you don't want to be down-hearted. You'll round into shape."

"What's that?" asked Smith. Then, suddenly realizing that Lambert was talking foot-ball, "Why, what do *you* know about the game?"

The remark was not meant ungraciously, and Lambert did not misunderstand it. "I know a little," he returned. "I know enough to feel sure that you'll come into shape."

"You never told me that you'd played. Where did you play?"

"Three years ago—before I came here, of course. It was up the State. I played quarter-back, and they used to say I could play some. At any rate, I've always taken a good deal of interest in the game."

"You played *quarter-back!*" repeated Smith incredulously. His own misery was forgotten for the instant. He ran his eye over Lambert's figure as if the latter was a horse under inspection. Then a light flashed into his face. "Yes," he said slowly, half to himself, "you're built for quarter-back, and as hard as nails too? What an ass I am never to have suspected it! But you said nothing?"

"I've done with foot-ball—as far as playing goes. But that isn't saying I've forgotten everything. And *you'll* do the trick yet."

Smith, brought sharply back to the subject of his own limitations, smiled. "No," he returned, "that's not going to be. Everybody else knows it, and so do I. It's not in me to move faster. But, well,—thank you, just the same."

The result of the game with Chicago convinced Lambert—if he had not been sure all along—that Smith was right. For all his energy, nerve, and honest effort, Smith at quarter-back nearly lost the day for Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania players left the grounds in dogged silence. The facts clinched the forebodings of two weeks back and chilled the enthusiasm of every Pennsylvania sympathizer. Woolston, with grim face, walked back to the training-house. There was no use of "dressing down" Smith, he decided. Indeed, he could only feel sorry for the latter. But the team *must* be strengthened at quarter-back.

At eight o'clock that evening Jim Price stuck his head in at Smith's door. "Come on!" he called; "the crowd's coming in. And we've got to make it a 'go' to-night."

Smith came to the door of his bedroom. "Can't do it, old man,"

he answered. "I'm—well, my head's knocked out to-night. I'm going to bed."

Price stood where he was a moment, wondering; then, understanding a little of how matters stood, said he was sorry, and went away.

Lambert was in his own room. Smith walked to the windows of the study. At the far end of the Triangle he could see the men gathering. Outside of the sharp circles of light cast by the electric lamps the archway opening on the Little Quad loomed up darkly. On the level stretch of grass between a good-sized crowd of men had assembled, and more were pouring in through the big gate-way and coming out of their rooms along either side of the Triangle. It was a meeting to rouse enthusiasm and rally the undergraduates around the foot-ball team. At any other time Smith would have been the leading spirit in it.

But to-night he kept himself screened by the curtains, and, as the room was dark, those who passed by decided that Smith already had come out.

Presently, someone began speaking from the steps which rose from the Triangle to the level of the Little Quad. Smith could see the speaker's figure plainly outlined against the field of light behind the arches; he heard the shouts of the men and the applause. When they cheered it made his ears ring.

It was the old Pennsylvania challenging cry—the long "Hoo Rah!" which he so often had led or followed and which thrilled every fibre of his being as often as he heard it. But to-night it made his pulses leap but an instant, the next brought home to him the fact that they were yelling, not in celebration of a victory, but to cover *his* failure. It was but the first of a series of failures too which they would have to cover. And this was to be the outcome of what he had set his heart upon! If only——

Suddenly he took a short step away from the window. Then he abruptly halted.

An idea had flashed upon him which, in the flood of his self-reproach, he had been on the point of putting into instant execution. It was absurd that he had not thought of trying it before! Then, a realization of all that this step would entail for him personally made him pause. To play on the University foot-ball eleven was the thing he had coveted since first the University came to have a definite meaning for him. It was the one honor which he could hope to earn while he was a Pennsylvania man. In a few months he would graduate. And those three years gone-by had been given up to working for the University and not for himself. Now he had only to say nothing; even more, he need only make this appeal which had suggested itself impersonal, and he would retain all that had come to him.

Just then, glancing out the window again, he recognized Jim Price on the steps speaking to the crowd, and a moment after he heard the long "Hoo Rah!" and after it, sharp and quick, three times repeated:

"Smith! Smith! Smith of 'Pennsylvania'!"

They were cheering him; cheering him to give him heart, to show that they believed that he had done his best, though he had done so poorly; cheering to prove to him that they trusted him.

In that instant his mind was made up. If he was "Smith of 'Pennsylvania'" to them, he would prove to himself that he was all that the name implied.

He walked to the door of Lambert's bedroom. "Lambert," he said, "I want you to do something for me."

"What is it?" asked Lambert. Smith's tones were so earnest that he wondered. Besides, Smith did not often ask favors.

"It's to play quarter-back for the University," Smith answered.

"Quarter-back?—me? Why, you're crazy!" ejaculated Lambert. All at once the truth came to him. "Not on your life!" he added quickly. "I've done with foot-ball, I told you that—long ago. Besides——"

"Yes, I know what you're going to say," broke in Smith. "I know what you're thinking of, I guess. You wouldn't take my place? You——"

"I couldn't fill the place," said Lambert impulsively.

"Yes, you could. I know you could," went on Smith. "At any rate, you've got to try, and try your best."

"I won't!"

"But you will! You will because I ask you to."

Lambert shook his head. He was stubborn when aroused. But this time Smith meant to have his way. "You'll do it because I ask it," he continued. "It'll be the greatest personal favor you can do me. Look here. It's this way. From the day I came to feel proud of Pennsylvania I've done—what I could to push the University on. It hasn't been much, but I've enjoyed doing it. And my mind's set on seeing us win at foot-ball this season. Now, we can't do it while I'm at quarter-back, and I know it. Don't say anything, I'm sure of what I'm talking. I mean to go off the team. But I want you to try for the place, and I want you to fill it, as I'm certain you're able to fill it. If you won't do it, you'll——"

Lambert interrupted him with a protest, but Smith resumed his argument, and would not be dissuaded. So, for an hour, he urged and pleaded with Lambert.

At last Lambert could only say: "But I've played no foot-ball for years. I'm out of shape. They'd laugh at me; they wouldn't have me."

Then Smith knew that he had the day almost won. "They'll have

you quick enough, if—— And as for condition, you work in the gym. all the time, and you don't smoke or drink. You must come round—right away! I'll introduce you to Woolston. Come on!"

It was the last five minutes of play in the game with Harvard, the contest for which every Pennsylvania player nerved himself as for no other, the one on which the foot-ball enthusiasm of the year was centred. About the big amphitheatre of Franklin Field tier on tier of benches rose, filled with twenty thousand men and women who looked down on an oval of green and dusty brown, squared and grid-ironed with white, on which twenty-two men set themselves, hand on thigh, shoulder to shoulder, and every eye on the ball.

The staccato "Rah!" of Harvard was silent, the challenging cry of Pennsylvania hushed, the faint bark of a dog somewhere smote sharply on the ear, so still and expectant was everything. For one hour and a half the men in crimson and the men in red and blue had plunged and fought up and down the field. Now, with the minutes going fast, it remained for either side to score.

On the side-lines, crouched as if everything depended on his spring, was Smith of "Pennsylvania," wearing those six sweaters which long association had made almost the badge of his office. His jaw was tense, his hands trembling, his eyes fastened on the double line of men opposite to him, where, ten yards from Harvard's goal-line, the Pennsylvania centre-rush was about to put back the ball.

A man beside Smith closed his watch. "Three minutes left!" he said. But Smith did not hear him.

There was a movement in the Pennsylvania line. The Harvard players plunged and broke through, a dozen men crashed together, swayed, and fell to the ground. But out from behind this heap shot a figure, a short, thickly built figure, running close to the ground, slipping beneath the clutch of the nearest man in crimson, lunging sideways as another in the same uniform dived at him viciously, and then driving straight at the tall man with light hair and crimson stockings, the last man in his path; and so, with a pair of crimson arms wrapped about him, clearing that fateful white-washed line between the goal-posts, and there rolled on the ground.

It was done. An instant's gasping pause, when twenty thousand hearts hoped or doubted that twenty thousand pairs of eyes had seen aright; then, from end to end, from top to bottom of those long, deep benches—except for one stretch where the crimson flags drooped—arose such a blare of horns and roar of voices that it seemed as if thunder greeted the mass of red and blue which blotted out the sky-line. Pennsylvania had scored. Lambert, the quarter-back, had crossed the Harvard goal-line for a touch-down.

A hush fell on the crowd again as the ball was brought out. But, as it sailed over the cross-bar, the thunder awoke again, and again the red and blue whipped the breeze. Time was up! An avalanche of men leaped the barriers and flooded the field.

They hoisted Lambert on their shoulders. Smith in his six sweaters was left alone; somehow, for the moment, he couldn't join in the rush.

But as suddenly a crowd bore down on him, and hoisted him aloft. They were shouting, "Smith of 'Pennsylvania'!"

Smith, struck by wonderment, struggled to get down; he was sure he looked like a fool. But, then, it was the only time the thing ever happened to him.



TO SAINT VALENTINE

BY JENNIE BETTS HARTSWICK

S AINT Valentine, though wide your fame
You don't deserve your pious name,
And this the reason of my plaint—
Your conduct misbefits a saint.

From youthtime up to middle age
I've catered for your patronage,
But ever since we've been acquaint
You haven't acted like a saint.

For when comes round, as fixed as fate,
The day which you appropriate,
You give me cause for new complaint
In manner most unlike a saint.

I long have sued for Mabel's smiles
And yielded to her costly wiles,
But ardent lines or bauble quaint
Alike are spurned,—ungrateful saint!

Your halo's rimmed with many a dart;
Your symbol is a wounded heart;
Fond swains you lure with artful feint.
Such actions don't become a saint.

Your name no longer should appear
In saintly calendar 'tis clear,
For I affirm, without restraint,
You're more a sinner than a saint.

TALKS WITH CHINESE WOMEN

By Lily Howard



Part II.: AH LAT

A GAIN I was amah-less, and again I appealed to my kind friend. One day she came to five-o'clock tea, and while we enjoyed that refreshing beverage she told me of my good luck.

"My dear, Ah Lat has lived ten years with Mrs. Fergusson, and has brought up her numerous babies, showing the greatest devotion and judgment; but now the Fergussons are returning to England to put their small flock to school. They offer to take Ah Lat, but nothing would induce her to leave China. She tells me she does not wish to be "small-child-amah" any more. She says "My belong too muchee ollo; my likee more better one peicee lady no got chillo."

We then and there arranged that Ah Lat should come to me at once, and in a few days she made her appearance—a small woman in wide trousers and short, full coat of a stiffened, glazed black silk that rustled with every movement. On her feet, which were the size nature intended them to be, she wore white stockings and slippers without back or heel, which flip-flapped as she walked. The black paste on her hair made her coiffure as stiff and shining as her trousers and jacket. Her nose was indicated by two small holes; her eyes were oblong, heavy-lidded slits; her wide mouth showed strong white teeth; numerous small-pox indentations completed one of the ugliest but best-natured faces I ever saw. We were soon good friends, and she was installed in a little room not far from mine, which was furnished as any maid's room would be at home. In European establishments in China the servants' quarters are in a long row of small rooms at the back of the master's house. In each room are two trestles on which are placed boards. Here they pile up the quilts they bring with them, and sleep comfortably with their porcelain or earthenware pillows under their necks. They bring with them their own cups and bowls, provide their own "chow" and cook, and are not supposed to use the master's coal or charcoal.



Ah Lat proved to be the treasure promised me—always busy, always cheerful—until she caught cold or had a headache, and then

she thought she was going to die; and instead of letting me doctor her she would take nauseous doses of crushed spiders in pills or toads' eyes from Chinese quacks. Sometimes she would appear with bruises around her throat, where she had had herself pinched by an expert. Again, she would have needles a finger long run through the flesh on her chest; and when I asked what good it did her, she declared that the doctor brought out long worms with each needle.

One warm afternoon I was sitting on my bedroom veranda enjoying the delights of a long chair, a cool wrapper, and the latest novel, when I heard amah's slippers flapping on the staircase. She was evidently looking for me. When she reached the veranda her expression was a combination of shame-facedness and amusement. Her first words were, "Missisee, my belong too muchee big fool!" Of course, I asked the cause of this conviction, and she proceeded to tell me a very amusing story.

She was washing clothes in the servants' court-yard, and the men of the household were squatting in a circle around their large kettle of rice, from which they replenished the small bowls each held under his chin. The chop-sticks were busily dipping pickled fish from a large bowl into their rice-bowls, and thence the tidbit was conveyed to their mouths. Suddenly a strange Chinaman appeared who pointed a threatening finger at her and exclaimed, "That woman is very ill! She will die this year unless she follows my advice! She has swallowed, years ago, a piece of broken cash which is now in her stomach, and must come out if she wishes to live!" He went on to say he would rid her of the dangerous cash if she would pay him a dollar. Foolish amah consented. With much gesticulation, talking, and waving of his arms, he filled a basin with water; then ordered her to gargle with some water from a cup, and spit it out into the basin of water. No sooner had she done so than he quickly plunged his hand into the water, and drew out a half cash—at the same time the water had turned blood-red. Next he proceeded to humbug credulous Ah Lat into buying pills, for two dollars a box, which would cure the soreness the cash had left in her stomach. "But, Amah!" I said, "did you feel badly?" She shook her head. "No, my belong all ploper," she answered.

It seems it was only after the charlatan was gone and his torrent of talk had ceased, and the men-servants had laughed at her, that she realized what a fool she was. I sermonized her for taking any stuff an unknown man might give her while she refused my European medicines! We are forced to be very careful in giving the Chinese any remedies, for if they die of course their relatives accuse us of poisoning them. And this is such a serious matter that I have been advised by persons who had spent most of their lives in China to let them

suffer and die rather than put myself in such a false position. Not long after, I was very seriously ill, and little Ah Lat nursed me back to life, spending night after night in my room on her pallet until she almost made herself ill. She was an incomparable nurse, and nothing could equal her devotion, gentleness, and tact. Her usual greeting was "Hello!" I can't imagine where she had picked this up, but it was so amusing that I never corrected her.

When I was going through the tedious term of convalescence, and I was too weak to see outsiders or read, I made her sit beside me holding my hand in her own small brown one, while she told me of her own life, ghost stories, and of all sorts of strange customs. I needed no book! Nothing could have been more amusing than the stories my questions elicited, made all the more amusing by the "pidgin English" in which they were told.

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She was very excited over a ghost which had made its appearance across the street in our rich Chinese neighbor's house, where the head of the family had died two months before. The funeral ceremonies had continued during an entire month and been my great amusement. From my "window's height" I had watched the façade of bamboo go up, its decoration with boldly painted dragons and many hangings, most effective in coloring. Then the white bamboo and paper swan was hung over the entrance-door to carry the soul away and prevent its return. Red standards on which the virtues of the deceased were inscribed in characters a foot long were placed in stands each side of the door-way. I had seen the family in mourning robes of white, over which was worn a coarse yellow sacking, or sackcloth, the men's queues unplaited and hanging loosely below their knees, the women with their hair streaming, their heads covered with white veils, issue in a howling, screaming procession from the house and go some distance down the street in quest of water belonging to another than the family with which to wash the corpse. I had never wearied of watching the sedan-chairs arrive with visiting friends, who all brought offerings and presents. I never tired of the daily gathering of Buddhist nuns and priests, whose chanting would have driven anyone less interested quite mad; nor of the assembling of the Chinese band, whose tootings and shrill pipes replaced the chanting when the priests and nuns gave out. I had watched the daily distribution of rice to a waiting throng of poor, old, small-footed sewing-women, children with babies tied on their backs, cripples, and deformities. I had even gone with amah and looked timidly into the hall of the house of mourning, which I found had been transformed into a "chapelle ardente," where the corpse was lying in state (and quicklime) in its huge carved and gilded coffin. So when amah said the ghost of this same corpse had come back and

entered the sleeping body of an old amah who had been years in the family, I was eager to hear her story. Apparently every night, when the amah slept, the family heard the voice of the dead father proceed from her room. On entering, they found the father's voice came from her, and was giving them advice and directions about the division of his property and the family affairs in general. I came to the conclusion that the old woman was a shrewd old creature, who was playing on their superstitions to have things arranged as she wished them to be. I suggested this to Ah Lat, who exclaimed, "How fashion can talkee allo same master, beforetime? No can! She belong allo same dead!"

They had pinched and punched her, without waking her, until the ghost had said his say, when she would remain profoundly sleeping for awhile, and then wake, much astonished to find the household around her.

Ah Lat was a most pious little Christian and a devout Catholic. Once in a while she would ask me for permission to "go talkee that good man," which was her way of expressing her wish to go to confession. She was not a convert, but the descendant of a family converted by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century.

She gave me the most touching description of their sufferings from the dislike of their fellow-countrymen.

This little community of Catholics lived far up the great West River, above "Wu-chau-fu," where a priest could only reach them once a year, after a long, tedious, and adventurous journey, being pulled the two hundred and fifty miles by trackers against the swift current of the mighty river.

He instructed this remote flock in the truths of their faith; baptized, confirmed, married, and said mass for them.

"What did you do, Amah," I asked, "during the rest of the year, when you had no priest?"

"We all met on Sundays, and read the mass-prayers and Bible aloud," she answered.

Could anything be more beautiful than faith preserved and practised in the face of so many difficulties!

Ah Lat's mother had been left, by the early death of her husband, a poor widow, with two little girls to support. They gained their livelihood by working in the muddy rice-fields, and were so poor that there was no thought of binding their feet.

A marriage was arranged for Ah Lat with a boatman whose business took him down the river as far as Canton, and beyond even to Macao.

"Tell me about your wedding, Ah Lat?" I asked.

"Long time before must sew-sew plenty, and one week before my wedding must lie on my bed and makee cly plenty; and allo that young girl, my flend, must come and sit around that bed and makee cly."

She proceeded to tell me that a few days before the wedding the groom sent a sum of money in proportion to his means to the mother, and a procession of red lacquered stands carried by red-coated coolies brought presents to the bride.

"What does the bride give the groom?" I inquired.

"Oh! plenty shoes, she must makee!" answered Ah Lat.

The next day, at nightfall, the coolies in their bizarre costumes came to carry the lacquered stands bearing vases, fruit, pictures, sam-shui (wine) in jars, household furniture, and many other things to the groom's house, forming an escort to the great bridal chair, gorgeous in its decorations of kingfisher's feathers, which shine like turquoise stones.

Amah spoke with pride of the long fight her girl friends made to prevent her being carried to the chair. She laughed heartily when she recalled how they even went the length of burning something to make such a nasty-smelling smoke that she and they were nearly choked. Finally the "go-between" woman rushed in, picked up little Ah Lat in her arms, put her in the splendid chair, and locked the door. Then, getting into her own chair, the whole procession started. First came the band of squealing, hurdy-gurdy-like instruments; the red stands of presents followed; then came many boys bearing beautiful painted silk lanterns. Other boys and men set off fire-crackers and bombs all along the route, and Ah Lat sat happy, trembling, and expectant in her gorgeous sedan-chair, dressed in her best finery, a veil over her face. She began to find it very hot and close, shut up as if in a small closet, and was very glad when the "go-between" unlocked the door and lifted her out. At the threshold she was held for a second over a copper brazier of burning coals, to indicate that she must be ready to go through fire and water for her husband. Her new family were awaiting her in their best room, where the ancestors' tablets were placed on an altar. Before these she and her husband knelt. When they rose from their knees he lifted her veil, and for the first time saw his wife's face.

Next day was a momentous one, for Chinese custom exacts that the bride should cook the good things for a feast to which all the husband's relations are invited.

Ah Lat paused in her own experiences to tell me how the daughter of a very rich man nearly "lost face" because her father had forgotten to send the fuel. It seems the bride's family must not only provide

the ingredients for the dishes she intends to prepare, but also the wherewithal to make the fire.

This rich bride's mother-in-law, with a sarcastic look, announced that there was no wood. The haughty bride could not stand this, so she turned to the servants and ordered them to break up a fine red lacquered chest in which were packed rolls of silk, brocade, and crape (part of her trousseau), and with these costly stuffs and the pieces of the chest the fire was made, the dinner successfully cooked, and the family's pride saved! When she told her father, he cried, "Well done, my daughter!" Ah Lat found this feast the day after her wedding most trying, as the bride must serve the men's table, and they are allowed to make all sorts of jokes at her expense and personal comments, and she must be able to bear it all with a cheerful smile. She makes her reputation for life in the family by the wit and cleverness with which she answers these sallies.

For some days after this friends and relations visit the bride, and all bring offerings. The bride enters the room, and stands with her arms on the shoulders of two women, and must remain quite motionless—if she is warm, they move the hand in which she holds her fan. Often the jewelled head-dress and splendidly embroidered robes are hired, and I have known poor coolies to borrow money for their wedding expenses and so weight themselves with debt for years.

"Were you happy, Ah Lat?"

"My belong too muchee happy, Mississee! But bimby my small baby makee die, and my cly plenty—my no can eat—my no can sleep—and my husband talkee more better my go on that junk Canton side."

Her husband left her at Canton with friends, while he went on to Macao. The junk was caught in a fearful typhoon and lost, with all on board.

Ah Lat found herself far from her home among strangers. For a time she was prostrated with grief; but with characteristic energy she bethought herself of the Catholic priests, to whom she applied to get her a place as amah in some English family. They recommended her to the Fergusons, with whom she had remained for years and prospered. She saved money, bought two houses, and adopted her nephew, in order to have a son who would care for her grave. While she was with me I found her sister's family simply preyed upon her. She supported the whole lot, as well as sent money to her old mother.

Rich widows who do not marry again often have "Pi-lows," or arches, erected in their honor by an admiring community and loving family. Ah Lat is too insignificant and poor to attain this dignity; her only monument is the love and esteem of all who have known her!

A BLOODLESS VENDETTA

A TALE OF MULBERRY BEND

By Henry Wilton Thomas

Author of "The Last Lady of Mulberry"



NOTHING ever made the sons and daughters of Italy so homesick as the sight of the Bersagliere, in full feather, swinging through the streets of Mulberry Bend. As he dashed by in the quick-step with which the King's Sharpshooters always march, his sabre, glistening from its gorgeous tasche, seemed to clank the proud acclaim, "Behold! the Italian Army is in America."

While the sight of this magnificent reminder of their native shores made the old women dream of the past, it stirred in many a young and pretty head practical thoughts of the future—a future with the Bersagliere as a husband. He was counted the best catch in the Bend. When bold tongues put to him the question, "Why don't you take a wife?" he answered, "Pazienza; there is time."

Besides the girls angling for this rare fish there were men who tried to hook him. These were the keepers of the cafés and restaurants. It was a profitable thing to have the Bersagliere for a customer. Where he sat was the head of a table that was never scant of eaters; where he quaffed his vermouth there was sure to be clinking of glasses. And it became a settled fact in the Bend that the café of vogue was the café to which the Bersagliere gave his presence. Now, for two years he had spooned his robust soup and curled his spaghetti in the Café of the Good Appetite, an humble but epicurean refectory that hid its light in a basement beneath the Italo-American Bank. Its owner was Signor Boccabella, a fussy little old bachelor, with a long nose whose turned-up end almost matched the skyward curve of his waxed mustachios. From his chin, of which he had little more than a robin, hung a thick imperial whose point touched the top of his apron. He wore a white muslin cap, and at all times looked every inch the cook. Besides running the kitchen, he waited on the table and discharged the duties of cashier. From the day that the Bersagliere became its patron the Café of the Good Appetite had enjoyed an unbroken era of prosperity.

But one day a dark cloud arose in the horizon of Signor Boccabella. A new restaurant was opened around the corner. In flaming letters on the window glass was painted the sweeping title, "Restaurant of the Universe." The proprietor—Cipriano Gridare—was a new-comer in the Bend. From the mouth of Luigia the Garlic Woman, whose omniscience none dared question, came tidings of his shadowed past. Her message told that Gridare was a fugitive from the hills of Piedmont, having failed in his vocation of ham-smuggler owing to the meddlesome ways of the Dogana guards. At first his restaurant was not a success, but with wits brightened on the emery of a smuggler's life he quickly perceived the key to success, and straightway set about possessing himself of it. The key, of course, was the Bersagliere.

All unwary of the schemes that his rival had set afoot, the honest Signor Boccabella lived and fussed and cooked in the sweet faith that the Bersagliere, the main prop of the house, would continue his allegiance to the Café of the Good Appetite until Cupid should lure him to a board of his own. But one evening at dinner the Bersagliere's accustomed place was vacant, and Bonifazio the Calabrian, a devotee of the Boccabella cuisine, tumbled into the room, barely escaping a broken neck in his hurry to get down the stone steps. It was clear that something dreadful had befallen. "What the devil is the matter?" was the question repeated a dozen times by every mouth. The Calabrian stood and gasped for breath. At length, pointing towards the Restaurant of the Universe, he managed to pronounce the awful words:

"The Bersagliere—he is there—eating a ragout of green peppers!"

"Where is he?" asked Signor Boccabella, unable to realize the horrid truth.

"In the Universo."

"Impossible!"

"It is so."

Without another word, and armed with a cheese-knife he chanced to be using at the time, Signor Boccabella shot up the steps and dashed towards the rival restaurant, bent upon the innocent blunder that gave edge to a bloodless vendetta, wherein a pretty maid's love and an old man's hatred played slyly at cross-purposes, but played merrily into each other's hands, to the triumph of the old man and the happiness of the pretty maid.

As Signor Boccabella was about to turn the corner a blue-coated giant gripped his arm and said:

"Come with me. No monkey work, now, or I'll break your face."

And Signor Boccabella spent that night in the station-house. In the view of the police, a wild-eyed Italian running through the Bend with a large knife in hand is an infallible sign that some murderous

deed is in the way of accomplishment, and an arrest is deemed to be in order.

Before a year had gone by there remained to Signor Boccabella as steady patrons only three or four loyal souls and such straggling customers as could not resist the alluring odors that reached the sidewalk from the café's tenebrous depths.

Since the historic day when the Good Appetite first opened its doors the bill of fare had never been changed.

But with the reverses that had visited him by reason of the loss of his peerless customer, the Bersagliere, there quickened in his brain at times a thought that filled him with horror. A voice sounding from the thirsty mouth of revenge seemed to mutter in his ear: "No vendetta, no vendetta, if you don't change your bill of fare!" At times his tottering will would listen to this voice, but only for a moment, and then in the anguish of his soul he would cry out:

"Not that, O destiny! Aught but that."

One morning, as though to take him at his word, fate sent him an alternative. And what a beautiful alternative! A rugged maid in short red petticoat and sabots. She and Signor Boccabella met at the foot of the stone steps just as he was about to put on view at the door a platter of fresh-cooked flounders—fish that passed muster for soles in the Café of the Good Appetite.

"Ah, Signorina, good-morning," was the Signore's salutation. "I beg you to take a seat. You have just landed. Non é vero? One knows it by the sab—I mean by the short petti—wine of Bacchus! how stupid I am this morning!—I mean that you have the sweet bloom of beloved Italy."

In his confusion he almost dropped the platter of flounders.

"They are all the shoes and petticoat I have," she said, with a shrug of one shoulder, as she seated herself at the Boccabella board.

"Do you think they will stop me getting work?"

"What part are you from?" he asked. "From the Modena country I should say."

"Yes, but in the mountains. It is a far-away village buried half the year in the snow of the Apennines. The black hand harvested the corn and the mists withered the grapes. So there was no work in the valley for the mountain folk. The hungry mouths at home were too many, and I came away. The steamship agent said it would be easy to get work and make money in America. But I suppose I must get leather shoes."

"Ah, cara mia, it is not easy to make money in America. Listen: I am a signore, well instructed; yet I find that money is very hard to get. What, then, can you, a girl of the basso people, do?"

"I can work," she answered.

"Excellent. But what can you do?"

"I can make saddle-bag cheese and sell it. I used to do that in the market-place of Modena; but that was before the devil's grip strangled old Regina, our cow. As you see, I am strong, and can lift and carry and—cook."

This raw mountain maid boasting a knowledge of the art of cooking—to his mind the art of arts—was too much, and the padrone of the Café of the Good Appetite laughed.

"It is true," she said, not knowing what part of her speech had tapped the latent mirth of the kitchen sage. Then she added: "I am hungry. How much do you charge for soup?"

"Three cents, Signorina."

"How much is that?"

"It is the same as three soldi."

"I will take some."

From a pocket of the red skirt she drew forth a pink-and-white handkerchief, in a corner of which was tied up her poor little store of money. She counted out three Italian coppers of five centimes each. The Signore watched her through a spy-hole that he had in the partition separating the kitchen from what he called the saloon. The more he looked at her the more radiant grew her beauty, and the nearer he came to a decision about the revolutionary idea wherewith his mind was in travail. When he again appeared in the saloon he carried a plate heaping with rice, cabbage, beans, and bits of pork,—soup without a drop of liquid.

"She is hungry," he said to himself, "and I will give her a good repast."

"It is like the soup they give us in the vineyards when we leave the mountains in autumn to go down and pick the grapes," she said.

"It must be better, Signorina," said Signor Boccabella, "for I made it myself. You will have a glass of wine, neh?"

"No," she said. "I am too poor to have wine." Then, as though yielding to the extravagant desire, "How much is a fifth of a litro of wine in this country?"

"Well," said the Signore, "the price is five cents for a glass of the best wine of California; but it is only the signori who drink that. I have no call for the California since my best customer, the Bersagliere, left my table. Then there is the wine of Ohio. You don't know where that is, do you? Well, I don't know myself. The wine of Ohio I sell for three soldi the glass. But for the moment, my dear, we shall not talk of price. You shall drink a glass of the best California with Signor Boccabella. That is my name. How does the Signorina call herself?"

"My name is Rosa Quaranta."

"The health and good fortune, then, of Rosa Quaranta," said the Signore, touching her glass.

She took a deep, candid draught, and asked,—

"Do the bersaglieri come here?"

"The bersaglieri? But there is only one."

"Only one bersagliere in all America?"

"Only one. The King has no soldiers here."

"Then I saw this Bersagliere," she said. "He was going into a restaurant over there." She pointed towards the Restaurant of the Universe, and a scowl settled on the face of Signor Boccabella. "How handsome he is!" she went on. "Some fools made fun of my wooden shoes, and he stopped and told them to shut up. He is good and brave, I think, and how sympathetic!"

"Yes, you saw him. The Italian societies are going to parade to-day, and he is in uniform. Do you know what the Italian societies are in New York? Well, I will tell you. They are only stuffed soldiers."

The desertion of the military set to the ham-smuggler had soured Signor Boccabella against every one who wore a uniform. He carried the glasses into the kitchen to replenish them, and there held a final council with himself. "If I have her here as a waiter," he mused, "her beauty will draw many young men—and the old ones too. The glory of the Café of the Good Appetite will revive. Old customers will come back, and with them the Bersagliere. The ham-smuggler will be ruined. Ah, the beautiful vendetta! It was an evil hour for the dog Gridare when the prison door closed on a Boccabella. I will be revenged, and without changing my bill of fare. No, no; the colors of my house shall not be lowered. It is settled."

He strode into the saloon with firm step and serene air. Setting the glasses on the table, he said:

"I am in need of an assistant. You say you can work."

"And cook," she added proudly.

"Bah! Listen. If you wish to work for me I will hire you. I will teach you to serve at the table. Until you have learned the trade I will give you your board and lodging. What do you say? Will you be the assistant of Signor Boccabella?"

Rosa answered: "Yes; I will work for you."

"It is well. We shall begin at once."

Thus, calmly and without ado, was a great revolution achieved.

When Bonifazio the Calabrian came in for dinner that night he nearly fell off the bench at sight of Rosa, who appeared from the kitchen and, with a courtesy, said,—

"At your service, Signore."

Signor Boccabella was watching at the spy-hole.

"But—excuse me," said the Calabrian, staring boldly at first, and then struck timid under the spell of her beauty. "Are you—here?"

"Where else?" said Rosa. "Don't you see me?"

There was a smothered "hee-hee!" behind the partition.

Cavalliere Ginocchio, the capitalless banker, next darkened the narrow door. Beholding Rosa carrying dishes, he stopped short on the threshold and looked about as though puzzled.

Signor Boccabella ran forward.

"Come in, come on," he cried. "This is the right place. To-day the Café of the Good Appetite has a new sauce. Hee-hee! You have here my assistant, Rosa."

The girl courtesied, and the old man, twirling his gray mustache, regarded her silently. She brought to his memory a little village in his own native mountains, where in the years long dead bright-eyed lasses of whom Rosa was a type danced the tarantella so gravely in their costumes of the olden time.

"Ah, yes," he said, waking from his revery, "a pretty assistant. My lovely flower, from what part has the wind carried you? From the mountains. I thought as much. You are indeed a mountain Rose."

And the Mountain Rose she was called as long as she lived in Mulberry Bend.

Events patted Signor Boccabella on the back. It fell out just as the inner messenger had whispered that day in the kitchen when he stood weighing the prodigious thought of having a girl waiter in the Café of the Good Appetite. As the fame of Rosa's beauty went forth the strayed sheep returned to the Boccabella fold. Every day saw an old customer back in his wonted place at the long table, while the gaps on the benches of the Restaurant of the Universe grew in number. But the Bersagliere, desired above all others, was not borne in on the flowing tide. One day a brother in arms said to him,—

"Come, let us go and be served with a dinner by the Mountain Rose."

The Bersagliere answered:

"No. In the never-dying words of the hero of Sebastopol, 'Here I am, here I stay.'"

And this grand speech, as well as many other smart sayings of the Bersagliere, reached the ear of Rosa. She tipped up her pretty nose and remarked,—

"This fellow is a fool."

Thus the flint-spark of pique fell in the heart of the Mountain Rose and ere long kindled it to love. Signor Boccabella, in his fits of temper, twitted the girl of her greenness, but for all that she was ripe enough to know that her beauty and not his vaunted cooking was

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the magnet that drew many patrons to the Café of the Good Appetite.

As she set a plate of tripe croquettes before the Calabrian that night he remarked,—

"What a lucky devil the Bersagliere is to have every girl in the Bend setting her cap for him!"

"That is not true," said Rosa. "There's one girl that isn't after him," and she touched the top of her apron with her forefinger and tossed her head in high disdain.

An hour afterwards, while the restaurant rang with the shouts of the men playing cards, Rosa, in the solitude of the kitchen, said to herself:

"I wish I could make him come here. Perhaps if he saw me with a sunrise comb he would find me prettier than any of the others."

She continued to wear her short red skirt and the wooden shoes, although she had thrown broad hints to Signor Boccabella that she would like to cast them. But, knowing the value of an advertisement, and being close with his money, he did not take these hints. He even encouraged her to make herself more conspicuous, though he did not allow it to draw upon his treasure. It came about in this way:

"To-morrow is Sunday," Rosa once said to him, "and I should like to wear a sunrise comb."

"Che sunrise comb! Do you expect to find such gewgaws in Mulberry Bend?"

"It is too bad if they do not have them," she said. "In the mountains I never went to church without my sunrise comb. Ah, how sympathetic they make one when the hair is well oiled."

"Yes," he said, "the sunrise comb makes a girl very sympathetic."

"Listen, Signore," said Rosa eagerly. "I can make one with teaspoons. It is very easy. Will you lend me the spoons?"

His answer was "Bah!" Then he thought: "Perhaps if the Bersagliere saw her in such a comb he would take a fancy to her and come to the café. That is the vendetta that I desire, and I must not neglect any chance that offers. It would ruin the Restaurant of the Universe. By the fire of Vesuvius! she shall have the spoons."

That Sunday Rosa went to the Church of St. Augustine with twelve well-polished teaspoons sticking in a semicircle from a huge knot that shone with two cents' worth of hair-oil.

The people gazed at her as she walked along with the high, up-swinging step that comes of long practice in keeping on shoes that are open at the heel. It was a proud day for Rosa, but a prouder one for the Bersagliere, for this Sunday was his birthday—the blissful anniversary when he shone with a lustre undimmed by rivals in military splendor. It never entered his mind to let his birthday go by

without putting on his soldier-clothes. His advent once a year in solitary and supreme pomp had become as fixed an institution in the Bend as the throwing of sugar-beans in carnival time.

For the first time in five years the Bersagliere was compelled to share his birthday honors with a rival. The people paid as much attention to Rosa as they did to him.

He and Rosa met in front of Gridare's place. The sight of her brought the Bersagliere to a sudden halt, and he regarded her with deep interest, while the ham-smuggler, who was looking, trembled for the fate of the Restaurant of the Universe.

The Mountain Rose walked on to church, well content with the pains she had taken to polish the spoons and arrange them in her hair.

"How handsome he is!" she thought. "Perhaps he will come to the Café of the Good Appetite to-night."

No one had to tell her that she had created a sensation in the Bend.

But a week passed, and no sign of the Bersagliere at the Boccabella board. Then Rosa said to the padrone,—

"I think I know a way to bring him here."

"Wine of Bacchus! Tell me, and I will raise your wages twenty-five cents a week."

"Listen. The Bersagliere is from Modena, my country. Well, the Modenesi are very fond of beefsteaks of pork, cooked in a way that I know. Let us put beefsteaks of pork on the bill of fare, and surely he will come and eat them."

The face of Signor Boccabella turned livid with rage. He drew back his head, threw up his hands, bent his fingers like claws, and glared at her as though he were a cougar about to spring.

"Change my bill of fare!" he shrieked. "By the fire of Vesuvius, ragazza, you are mad!"

"But I can cook them myself," she said, unterrified by the little man's words or looks. She had learned that he often showed his teeth without biting. "The Bersagliere would be sure to come, for the Modenese does not live that can resist beefsteaks of pork."

"Bah!" he growled. "I gave in to you once, and what came of it? The Bersagliere still goes to the Universe. I suppose you will want to wear my spoons again next Sunday. But you shall not. Change my bill of fare! Be robbed of my revenge by striking my colors! No, no! The Bersagliere must desert the ham-smuggler, and come to me just as I am. Ah, that is the sweet vendetta!"

A few days later he said to her,—

"What was it you said about beefsteaks of pork?"

Rosa repeated her daring suggestion, and the Signore said:

"Well, let us try the beefsteaks of pork. Ch—change the bill of fare."

The words almost choked him, but of late some of his flock had been making secret visits to the Universe, and he was desperate.

Next morning the people marvelled at beholding over the door of the Café of the Good Appetite a placard in large purple letters reading:

"BEEFSTEAKS OF PORK, STYLE OF MODENA, EIGHT CENTS."

Signor Boccabella and the Mountain Rose waited like anglers holding the rod for a game fish. "Will the handsome Bersagliere come to see me now?" was the question that the girl kept asking herself. Her employer would give an occasional peep at the placard, and wonder if the dawn of his vendetta was at hand. Once Rosa, who was standing outside, saw Finamore coming towards the café, and she scampered downstairs and told the Signore, who sprang into the kitchen and pretended to be busy. The Bersagliere stopped, and from her post in the back of the saloon Rosa saw his feet on the sidewalk. They were all of him that she could see, but she knew they were the dainty, well-polished boots that had figured in her dreams many a time. Moreover, there was not another pair of boots like them in the Bend. But the Bersagliere paused only to read and digest the new placard; then he walked on.

Two days passed, and still no visit from him. The beefsteaks of pork were a great success, and the fame of them reached the Bersagliere as he smoked in the Universe. Still he said, "Here I am, here I stay; a soldier must not be a shuttlecock." "Bravo!" was Gridare's delighted comment at this renewed assurance that his star customer would not desert him.

That day Rosa said to Signor Boccabella,—

"Put 'bersagliere' on the placard."

"No," he said; "your ideas are foolish."

Half an hour afterwards he changed the wording of the placard so that it read:

"BEEFSTEAKS OF PORK, STYLE OF THE BERSAGLIERE OF MODENA."

She watched and waited, but she was rewarded with only a glimpse of the same dainty boots as they paused before the entrance. One of the boots, its owner impelled by the latest edition of the placard, pressed the top step, but drew back and disappeared.

"What a fool he is!" she said. "Why does he not come in?"

Two more fruitless days of beefsteaks of pork, and Signor Boccabella grumbled like a steam roller. His longed-for vendetta seemed as remote as ever. "It is because I have listened to that girl," he said. "I will pay no more attention to her. Still, she seems a good girl, and she has the interests of my business and my vendetta at heart. She knows as well as I do that if the Bersagliere returns to

my table it is all up with the Universe, and she is as eager to ruin Gridare as I am. The day that I see him a wreck I will give the Mountain Rose a pair of leather shoes."

At that moment Rosa came from the kitchen bearing a platter of beefsteaks of pork that she had just taken off the fire.

"Where are you going with them?" demanded the little padrone.

The table was full of diners, and she whispered:

"I am going to put them at the door, where they can be seen from the street. Perhaps the Bersagliere will see them, and——"

"No more of your nonsense," he said. "Put them back in the kitchen."

She obeyed. Ten minutes later he deposed the croquettes of tripe from their coign of honor at the door and put in their place the beefsteaks of pork. Then he muttered, while he went back to the kitchen,—

"That girl shall not dictate to me."

It was a merry company that filled the benches that evening. Bonifazio, the Calabrian, flushed with Ohio, tried several times to kiss the hand of Rosa as she passed the dishes, and always got a resounding smack on the ear in return. A copper-hued mariner fresh from Samoa spun a yarn of the Tuscarora Depths, and startled Signor Boccabella by calling for a napkin. A napkin! By the wine of Bacchus, it was an omen!—good or bad? Only the Bersagliere ever ordered a napkin. But the sailor's shore whim was not gratified, for at that moment the Mountain Rose was so intent watching a pair of boots on the sidewalk that she did not hear the amazing order. Of a truth the Bersagliere was there, at the top of the stone stairway, and both dainty toes were pointing towards the platter of beefsteaks of pork. Plainly he was regarding the cookery so dear to the Modenese palate, and standing at such close range that the nostril as well as the eye was enchanted. Where the wily placard had failed to lure, the actual form and odor of the beefsteaks of pork had grandly captivated; for one of the shiny boots touched the top step, the other followed, and Rosa, her heart wildly agog, saw the Bersagliere descending to the Café of the Good Appetite.

The Calabrian, his mouth full of macaroni, was the first of the eaters to see him. He jumped to his feet, brandishing a fork to which threads of the paste were clinging, and sputtered:

"Bravo! Welcome to the Bersagliere!"

Signor Boccabella, who had been kneading bread, darted from the kitchen, his hands smeared with dough, his mouth agape, and eyes like billiard-balls. The living presence of the Bersagliere once more in the café drove from his head all the theatrical dignity he had rehearsed for the momentous occasion, and, realizing that the hour of

his vendetta had come, he rushed at the Bersagliere as though to fall upon his neck.

"Welcome! welcome!" he cried, grasping the other's hand and covering it with dough. "The Café of the Good Appetite is itself again. Ah, how long, mio caro, how long it is that I have not seen you here. But excuse me—nay, a thousand pardons! By the fire of Vesuvius, I am stupid! Rosa! Quick! Get a cloth and clean the dough from the hand of the Bersagliere."

And the Signore fled to the kitchen to hide his head in shame.

Then it was that the Bersagliere delivered himself of one of his famous epigrams:

"No matter about the cloth, Rosa," he said; "a soldier who boldly faces deadly bullets is not afraid of dough."

This brave sentiment set the "Bravos" popping all around the table. It was the first time he had ever spoken to her, but the Mountain Rose did not blush. She sprang to the other end of the room, caught up a cloth, and proved her love for the Bersagliere by cleaning the dough from his hands. He made many protests, but she insisted, saying,—

"Permit me, Eccellenza."

Eccellenza! Never had she used that word to any of the other patrons, and they all said to themselves,—

"The Mountain Rose shows him great respect."

"By the way," said the Hokey Pokey Man, "how go affairs at the Restaurant of the Universe?"

Signor Boccabella watched and listened at the spy-hole.

"Not very well," the Bersagliere answered; "though the Universe is a place where one finds no shoestrings in his wine."

The others, scenting the secret of his sudden retreat from the Café of the Good Appetite and eager to fathom it, urged him to explain. The Bersagliere yielded at last, and continued,—

"At the last dinner that I had in this café I found a shoestring in the bottom of my glass after I had emptied it."

"Bah!" muttered the Signore. "To leave me for that! He is too particular." And this sentiment seemed in full accord with the view of the men to whom the Bersagliere was talking, though they held their tongues.

"But I did not go away on that account," he added. "A shoestring does not scare a man like me. History tells us of soldiers who have eaten bootlegs. But listen. That night at supper what do you think I found in my soup?"

"What?" was the general voice, with the Signore's from behind the partition loudest of all.

"A clothes-pin! But mark you," the Bersagliere went on, "that

was not all that came free with my last supper. Again I found something in my wine."

"What?"

"A clam in the shell."

"Curses on the ham-smuggler!" cried Signor Boccabella, coming from the kitchen and shaking his fist in the direction of the Restaurant of the Universe. "It was his work. Now I know the dog that betrayed me! It was the son of Gridare, for he was here twice that very day, and he sat next to the Bersagliere. Do you not remember?"

"Yes," said the Bersagliere; "Gridare's son sat here, on my right."

And thus the question stands to this day, with the dark suspicion of the perfidy hanging over the head of the ham-smuggler.

"Never mind, Signore," the Bersagliere said, opening the napkin that Rosa had placed before him. "Let us bury the past. I am back again, and it is the beefsteaks of pork that brought me. I would have come before if I had seen them at the door."

"That girl is not so foolish after all," Signor Boccabella told himself as he returned to his pots and pans. "She shall have the leather shoes."

"And now, Signorina," said the Bersagliere, turning around to Rosa—"I mean the Mountain Rose. How well they have named you! But that could make no difference, for whatever they called you, you would be the prettiest ragazza in the Bend. Bah! That is a poor compliment. I will say the most beautiful ragazza in all New York. What say you, my companions?"

"Si, si; the most beautiful in all New York!"

Looking him in the face, Rosa said,—

"Eccellenza, have you come here to eat or to play the fool?"

This turned the laugh on him, and she was sorry that she had said the words.

"I have come here to eat," he answered, "and I see that my dinner is to be served with the sauce of a woman's sharp tongue. But when the sharp tongue is in such a pretty mouth it is a sauce that sharpens the appetite. Ha-ha! Now then, Signorina, if you please, a beefsteak of pork."

"Immediately, Eccellenza." And Rosa bounded into the kitchen, almost upsetting Signor Boccabella, who was bending at the spy-hole.

"Stupid!" he growled. "What are you about?"

"I am going to cook a fresh beefsteak of pork for Signor il Bersagliere."

"Bah! Take one of the cold ones and warm it up."

"No. He must have a fresh one."

By the time the Signore had thought it over and withdrawn his

objection the Mountain Rose had the meat frying in the oil, and the chopped peppers dancing merrily about it, as though the twain were well content to be cooked in each other's company.

"Ah, how beautiful!" the Bersagliere exclaimed, this time meaning the savory beefsteak of pork that Rosa placed before him. "It makes me think of home, of Modena. And the rich flavor! the sauce delicious! Truly it is a dish fit for an emperor. Ho, Signor Boccabella! Come here. Let me grasp your hand. You have always been a great cook, but this is your masterpiece. Never since I came to America have I eaten anything so good—so worthy of the palate of a gentleman and a soldier."

Signor Boccabella did not speak.

"Why, it is wonderful, Signore," went on the Bersagliere. "You are not Modenese, yet you cook this dish as well—nay, better than it was ever cooked in Modena. Ah, what a delight! Listen to me, my companions. I say here, in the presence of you all, and on the word of a soldier, that if I found a woman who could cook beefsteaks of pork as well as this I would make her my wife."

There was a crash in the kitchen. Rosa had dropped an armful of dishes. Signor Boccabella trembled, but not for the crockery. He dived behind the partition, where he found Rosa standing motionless amid the ruins.

"Never mind the dishes," he whispered. "Did you hear what the Bersagliere said?"

Rosa answered "yes" by pointing to the wreck on the floor.

"Stay where you are. Oh, what a vendetta, now! By the fire of Vesuvius, the ham-smuggler shall wish himself dead!"

Then he went back to the Bersagliere, striving hard to be calm, but his voice quaked as he said,—

"Do you mean what you say—that you will marry the woman who can cook beefsteaks of pork as good as these?"

"I have said it. My word is my bond."

"Even if she were a girl of the basso people—poor and humble?"

"Yes."

"Even if she were only a waiter in the Café of the Good Appetite?"

"Upon the honor of a soldier, yes. But what——"

"Rosa!" called Signor Boccabella, but she did not come from the kitchen. "Rosa, come here! No? Well, then I will fetch you."

He went to the kitchen door, took her hand, and led her forth. There was no eating now. Every knife and fork was idle and every voice hushed. A great episode in the history of Mulberry Bend was enacting. The Signore was calm again, and his voice steady.

"Rosa," he said, "I promised you a pair of leather shoes, but I

give you something better—a husband. Yes, and the best husband in the Bend. Signor il Bersagliere, permit me to present you to your promised wife. I did not cook the beefsteaks of pork. They were cooked by the Mountain Rose. May you live long and be happy.”

“What!” exclaimed the Bersagliere, springing to his feet and taking the hand of Rosa, and looking into her eyes as no one had ever seen him look at a woman. “Is this true?”

“Si, Eccellenza,” she answered.

“Dio! But one minute, Signor Boccabella,” the Bersagliere said. For the first time in the memory of anybody the paragon of wit and self-sufficiency was embarrassed, unequal to the occasion. “There is a thing I did not mention,” he went on, boggling his words; “but I can’t marry her unless—unless——”

The men at the table broke in with hisses, Rosa withdrew her hand from the Bersagliere’s, and the Signore, his face depicting a volcano of scorn, snarled:

“And you—you talk of the honor of a soldier! Bah! You——”

“Stop!” said the Bersagliere, now in his old tone of command. “Hear me first; then you may speak. I will marry the Mountain Rose, and count myself the luckiest man in the Bend; but one thing is needful before I can make her my wife.”

“What?” was the loud and angry chorus.

“The lady’s consent.”

“Bravos!” now replaced the hisses.

He took her hand again and said,—

“Rosa, will you have me?”

“Si, Eccellenza.”

The kiss that sealed the troth was drowned in the wild din of shouts and applause with the knives and forks that arose from the table.

On the very day that the Bersagliere led the Mountain Rose to the altar the Restaurant of the Universe closed its doors, and a week later the ham-smuggler was peddling second-hand tomatoes with a push-cart.

On the wedding-day the Mountain Rose creaked her way to the Mayor’s office in the pride of brand-new leather shoes, the gift of Signor Boccabella. From her coil of glistening hair spread a radiant sunrise comb, made of one dozen new tin spoons. The Bersagliere was in full uniform.

And for weeks thereafter, when, man and wife, they walked in the Bend on Sundays, hand in hand and looking at one another with loving glances, the envious girls who had set their caps in vain would sneer:

“Look! The beefsteaks of pork have not lost their savor.”

MRS. GAYLORD'S CELLAR PARTY

By Three Stars



SOME say it was a grand success; others that it was a wretched affair; but, be it as it may, I think in fairness to the principal actors, and for the satisfaction of the numerous critics who exploited themselves at the time, a proper explanation of this curious function should be made.

Sitting at my dinner-table one pleasant December evening, I had just finished the final mouthful, and was about to rise, when my wife addressed me thus,—

“Gay, dear, let’s give a cellar party.”

“A cellar party!” said I. “What on earth is a cellar party?”

“A cellar party,” she answered, “is a party in the cellar. You know we have given and been to all kinds of parties conceivable,—breakfasts, dinners, suppers, teas, picnics, coaching, hay-rides, and other things,—and people are tired of them; they crave something new, and a cellar party, in my opinion, fully answers that requirement.”

“Oh, I see. I thought at first you had found a new name for a church fair. But, my dear,” I said, looking at her intently to see if she were well,—and she was;—“don’t you think a cellar party is rather running that sort of thing into the ground?”

“No,” she said, with twinkling eyes yet steady look, so familiar; and I knew then and there that that kind of party, and no other, was to be. So before I proceed farther, I will explain, for the benefit of those who have not the pleasure of our acquaintance, who we are, and why we were justified in attempting such a novelty.

I am a Gaylord, and my wife was a McQueen. Now, the immediate Gaylord ancestry had made their fortunes in the leather business, and as one of the heirs, it required all my time and attention to look after my share. But the earliest association with the leather business I had was the recollection of the tannings I received when an undutiful child.

As fashionable society is rather strict in its limitations as to who shall or shall not become a recognized factor in its circle, I found it difficult at first to overcome the stigma the leather business cast upon

me; but by paying an expert in heraldic research the sum of three hundred dollars, I found that in the time of William the Conqueror one Reginald Lancelot Gaylord, who in the battle of Hastings had covered himself with gore and glory, had been knighted and assigned a coat-of-arms most suitable to adorn letter-paper and the panels of carriage-doors. The deeds and proper behavior of Sir R. L. G. and his descendants were wonderful to relate, until the line gradually ran down and lost its wealth, when one Montmorency Gaylord came to America to seek his fortune; and after that the family history resolved itself into names, avoiding particulars.

But the noble descent was established, and I discovered that I had been named Montmorency after the first Gaylord who had come to America to seek his fortune—or escape jail, for all I knew. Thus I made myself solid with all who did not know that I paid the expert three hundred dollars.

With Mrs. Gaylord the question of pedigree was different, because it had been handed down for generations how Hugh Macdonald MacQueen on Flodden Field had built a rampart of the enemies' corpses of his own killing, and there held his ground until a shaft from an English long-bow pierced his heart. Mrs. G.'s enemies would occasionally remark that they didn't see why an Irishman fought on the side of the Scotch that day; but her friends—and they were always in the majority—regarded that as slander. Besides, her father and grandfather had been successful lawyers, and as she was gifted with health and beauty, had been educated abroad, and possessed vast energy, she was well made up for a social leader. But her successes had finally driven her, as they do ambitious generals, to seek her Waterloo, and it struck me that in a cellar party she ought to find it.

Her last great curio in the way of an entertainment had been "a back-yard party," which was a great success. All the windows of houses from which a view of the scene could be had were well filled with half-concealed, uninvited neighbors, who could more easily appreciate the fact that there "wasn't room for everybody," them excepted.

A boy with blow-pipe and putty made things interesting for a time, but I found his range after the tenth shot, and with the aid of a policeman soon disposed of him, marking his family for social ostracism from that day on. Yet it was marvellous how the people enjoyed themselves. And now Mrs. Gaylord had to think of something new.

The fact that our house was a large one and possessed a very fine cellar was sufficiently suggestive for an active mind, and the entertaining facilities it presented were unsurpassed.

And now I return to our conversation.

"No, I am sure I can make it a great hit, if not a grand success, for it will be the first thing of the kind ever tried on earth."

"Or under the earth," I ventured; but my jest was unheeded, so she continued,—

"The nearest approach to it was Mrs. Knickerbocker's luncheon in Luray Cave; but there is nothing like having these things at one's own home, Gay."

"What set shall we try this on first, Mac?" I always called her Mac, her full name being Adelaide MacQueen Gaylord. "We haven't room to muster in our full list, and we can't tell anything by trying it on the dog."

Here I must digress again, to say that we divided our friends up into ten sets: No. 1, or intimates; No. 2, our next best, and so on down to No. 10 inclusive. No. 10 were those who had worked themselves up in the world on their own merits, and were not fully recognized in the social scale; No. 9 were a shade better, and so on to No. 1, who were people who hadn't done a stroke of work in their lives or their fathers before them, but who had historic ancestry—and hadn't employed genealogical experts to find it out, either, so Mrs. Gaylord thought. Experience had taught what people were congenial in various entertainments, and by thus making them into sets and numbering them, we knew exactly whom to ask to a limited or unlimited entertainment without wasting time.

"Well," she said, "if we try it on No. 10, and find it a great success, why, then, the novelty will have been wasted; while if we try it on No. 1, and it's a failure, why, we're socially ruined for two years to come. But I'm so sure of its being successful that I think I'll try it on 1, 2, and 3 sets, and that will just be enough to fill the cellar comfortably, and no one will get lost."

You see, we could blend each set with its succeeding numbers and make a congenial entertainment. For instance, No. 1 and 2 sets would work together, and so on, 2 and 3, 3 and 4, etc. But it would not do at all to invite 1 and 4 or 4 and 10, because the upper number would get together and criticise the lower, and finally go home early, leaving the field to the latter. We had a regular system of promotion and gradation, so that each entertainment given or attended by us was a sort of civil-service examination, of which the participants were unconscious. When we got home we fixed up our lists accordingly. Sometimes a No. 4 set family would behave so well and entertain so discreetly and often that we could jump them into the No. 1 set. But it was seldom that a No. 10 set family could make the jump to No. 1. In this way we made entertaining a fine art, and were regarded as diplomats in our way. But I very much feared that this cellar party would make people think we were wrong in our upper stories.

Then we began planning the details of preparation and lighting,

arranging the coal to look bright in the bins, and have roses sticking up through it. The heating apparatus was to be festooned with asbestos drapery, and the various pipes frescoed to look like striped candy sticks. We would clean the ash-pit and put the band there. Wines would be served direct from the wine-closet. Supper would be served under the pavement, and dancing would be omitted,—the novelty of the thing would take the place of that. The entrance would be through the basement, and the dressing-rooms would have to be on that floor too, thus cutting off any association with the elegant, sumptuous rooms upstairs, of which people were supposed to be tired.

The make-up of the invitations required deep thought, as they would have to be emblematic of the occasion. I suggested this:

"MR. AND MRS. MONTMORENCY GAYLORD.

"AT HOME.

"*In the Cellar.*

No. of house. Date."

But Mrs. Gaylord sniffed at this, and said it made the occasion too universal, so that we finally decided on the conventional form, requesting the pleasure, etc., at a cellar party. Then the question of color of paper came up. I suggested black cards, with letter-press in white. Mrs. G. again sniffed, and said "It would be an imitation of Mrs. What's-her-Name's coal-mine party. Her invitations were on black cards with brown envelopes." I remembered that party vividly. The refreshments were served at a neighboring hotel, and the last load up the shaft got stuck for nigh an hour and a half. The hostess, myself, and several others were in the last load.

"I'll tell you what: let's have robin's-egg-blue cards and envelopes, the letter-press in brown ink," she said.

That settled it. To send out every-day black-and-white invitations to a "cellar party" was an inconsistency the force of which never struck me before. In fact, I was beginning to gather in the enormity of the affair, and even to look beyond it, so I remarked, "Mac, dear, don't you think some one of the No. 1 set will get even with you and give a 'sub-cellar party'?"

"No," she replied, "what I dread most is that someone will find out a way to give a lawn-tennis party on the roof. I want to give one next May, as it will help to show our new elevator and serve as a foil to the cellar party."

I complimented her on her antiæsthetical ideas.

So we rose from the table, leaving the butler, who had followed our conversation carefully, with a dazed expression on his face, which years of training could not disguise. This was the first hit the "cellar party" had made. So far, so good.

The preparations began the next day. Mrs. Gaylord never allowed

ideas of this sort to season. She always acted while the impulse was on, to which fact I frequently credited the success of her novelties. Besides, the chances of being forestalled were lessened, even with a cellar party.

I had always thought our cellar was a particularly clean one, and never realized otherwise until an inquisitive neighbor asked me if I intended enlarging the house, as the number of cartloads of débris which had been taken from my cellar were suggestive of material alterations. He being a No. 5 set man of good standing on the list, a retort courteous was necessary, so I told him I was rearranging my wine-closet, an answer well calculated to allay any curiosity liable to be aroused by seeing materials go in also. However, I reported the conversation to Mrs. G., who immediately moved him down to No. 7 set, on the ground that his question was put too directly for good breeding, and that it contained insinuations as to our cellar too unfavorable; also that the unfeigned interest exhibited indicated that he was too much of a busybody to be a thorough gentleman; so, after all these indictments, I thought him fortunate in being put down only two sets.

We calcimined, electric lighted, decorated, and did everything to make the cellar attractive, and keep it still a cellar. To make a parlor of the cellar meant failure, and spoiled the opportunities of the press to make a unique description of it as a cellar party. *Happy Home Topics* was the journal I most dreaded; it would criticise our cellar party for three successive numbers sure. Mrs. G. handled the best daily papers with great tact. The proprietors and society editors of these were kept separate from the social list of ten sets and formed into a reserve corps, or, more properly speaking, a volunteer corps, upon which she would call as emergencies required. For dinners, theatre parties, and the like she would select social stars from the corps; but we both agreed that for a cellar party a universal call was required, as we were doubtful how cellar parties performed, and we might need all the fair play we could command. I asked Mrs. G. if she didn't think we were lowering the status of the press in encouraging them to write up a cellar party, it being a depressing theme, somewhat beneath them, and I suggested several mining journals as being more appropriate. But, turning her head away (she always turned her head away when I tried to be funny), she said: "They must write it *up*, they cannot write it down. It will bring them to the foundation of society's craving. Novelty! novelty! novelty! is the war-cry of society. Give me novelty, or give me death!"

I pressed the button immediately, as this outburst certainly deserved refreshments, and called her the queen of social architects, as in a cellar party she would reach a level never before attained.

The replies to our invitations soon began to come in, the proportion

of acceptances being greater than the customary number usually counted upon for a conventional entertainment, which fact assured us that the novelty was beginning to work, and that we had made another hit. That curiosity was aroused goes without saying, and the strenuous efforts of our friends to gratify this without overstepping the gilt-edged etiquette of 1, 2, and 3 sets was worthy to be chronicled in the annals of diplomacy. But we would not take hints, and when finally driven to an answer Mrs. G. would throw the responsibility on me, and I in turn would throw it on her, and as we would manage to separate when hard pressed, no one could figure out a coherent answer. So we kept the details of our cellar party a mystery without giving offence, although Mrs. What's-her-Name said she thought of giving a balloon lawn party in May. Mrs. W.-h.-N. was our worst rival as to novelties, but we thought her suggestion was a rather inflated idea and wouldn't carry much weight.

At last the fateful moment arrived. At nine P.M. Mrs. G. and I were at the foot of the cellar stairs betting with each other as to who would be the first to arrive. She bet an arm-chair that I had coveted for some time that it would be a No. 2 set representative. I bet her a silver ice-pitcher that she had admired very much that day at her favorite jewellers' that it would be a No. 3 set couple.

Suddenly we heard the tread of feet and rustle of dresses, which never sounded so ominous since I paid my first call as a boy. Slowly, even hesitatingly, one step at a time, the first guest descended the newly carpeted cellar stairs with her escort behind her. It was a No. 3 set couple (the chair was mine), both with that expression of disguised wonderment on their faces so easily detected, followed by others of the party in the same distrustful way. Then began the babble of receiving; the luscious strains of the "Cavalleria Rusticana" came from the ash-pit, a carefully arranged fountain played from the gas-meter, and the cellar party had commenced.

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Well, we all know what a party is, and even a cellar party cannot present such differences as to justify me in describing an evening reception. But certain things did take place which were exceptions to the general rule, and identified themselves as cellar-party possibilities only.

Of course, the usual conversation between host and hostess on the events of the evening took place after the party.

"Oh Gay, dear, isn't it grand it's all over?"

"Well, yes," said I, "but it was great fun! Did you see the plaster fall on the pianist? He struck one loud chord, and loosened a foot of

it just over his head,—I didn't know the fumes from ashes weakened plaster,—and that was the reason the band played on without a piano accompaniment."

"But that wasn't half as bad as the calcimining of Mrs. Spencer Delmonichasi. She insisted on leaning against a damp portion of the wall, and carried the impression with her. It's lucky she's only a No. 3 setter, Gay, or it would be a bad impression for us."

"What irritated me most was the way Van Rensselaer Brown amused his friends by hunting roaches. I saw him slay three, by the way, which made me ask him to come around some rainy Sunday and try his luck alone."

"And, Gay, I'm going to cross young Stuyvesant Smith off our lists entirely for a year and six months. He found a rat-hole near the wood-pile, and made Miss Cora Bradley laugh by crouching at it and mewling like a cat; I heard him clear through the coal-bin, and walked around to see what was going on. I hate the name of Smith, and will move down all Smiths and keep them in the sets below No. 5."

"How about Robinsons?" I asked. "Oughtn't they to go down too?"

"No, not yet. In fact, that reminds me; Martin Jones jammed his head very hard against the cellar steps, and when I raised my hand in sympathetic despair, he remarked, so reverently, that 'it was merely a reminder of the world above,' and walked on unconcernedly, as if nothing had happened. I believe he is studying for the ministry."

"Yes," said I, "and used to be centre-rush in the foot-ball team of his college; that hardened his head."

"I think we ought to promote him to No. 2 set, Gay. He's in No. 3 now. I'd have him in No. 1 if his name wasn't Jones; but I won't defile No. 1 set with any of those queer names, I don't care if their grandfathers were kings anointed."

I acquiesced, and after further discussion of events and promotions we retired for the rest of the morning.



The next issue of *Happy Home Topics* contained a long notice of the party, portions of which I quote:

"They do say that a certain species of insanity is a sign of good breeding, and point with pride at the peculiarities of many members of the smart set who, some people would say, had not sense enough to know when to come in out of the rain. Passengers along a certain portion of Fifth Avenue last Thursday night were stricken with curiosity at the sight of a house, dark and deserted above the first floor, yet ablaze with light in that portion usually devoted to the débris and

mechanical working of a household, known as the cellar. We knew it was not an escapade of servants in the absence of the owners, because their law of selection in such cases calls for the best apartments. No, lo and behold! it was a party composed of the smartest set, given by one of them in the cellar. We are not surprised, only a bit startled at the thought, What will these people do next? That same evening in the Bowery Mr. and Mrs. Costigan gave a party,—an ordinary affair because it was in the parlor. But it was a weighty affair too, because all the joists on one side of the room broke off at the wall, and let the party, fiddles, punch-bowl, candles, and all, into the cellar. The Costigans, as a matter of fact, had a cellar party too as a grand finale. Mark the analogy. The Fifth-Avenue party was a grand finale too, as the people who gave it are sane enough to travel, and will start for the far East next week to stay indefinitely. The damage in the Bowery affair amounted to one broken arm, three sprained ankles, and fifty-three dollars and seventy-five cents' worth of clothing. The damage in the Fifth Avenue affair amounted to six broken heads, caused by obstructions, and five thousand dollars' worth of clothing, caused by whitewash, rats, roaches, and other litter belonging to that department. . . ."

I read no further. I seized my riding-whip and hastened to the office of *Happy Home Topics*. I found there a meek office-boy.

"Is the editor in?"

"No; he has gone out for the day. Will the advertising manager do?"

"No."

Alas, I recalled to mind how many had been fooled this way; they could never catch the editors, and they never will. The sight of the placid, mild face of the office-boy and the empty stool seemed to cool my anger; I tried to preserve it until the morrow, but it was too late.

A few days after Mrs. G. said to me, "Gay, dear, people are saying we ought to have guardians or keepers to look after us, and Mrs. So-and-So didn't invite me to a luncheon she said she was going to have next week."

"And men at my clubs avoid catching my eye any more, and look after me when my back is turned."

"I think, Gay, we'd better go to Europe, visit Russia, and get out of the beaten track somehow."

"Mac, I think we'd better go to Brazil or Cape Colony. Let's go on the other side of the Equator and stay there two years; and when we come back, let's give a plain, sensible afternoon reception like other sensible people."

"Yes, and let the other people give cellar parties and make monumental fools of themselves, as we did."

TRUE BARBARA FRIETCHIE

By Anne Fletcher



WHEN I heard that Mr. Whittier's beautiful poem, "Barbara Frietchie," was a fable I resolved to investigate it. I took the train for Frederick and commenced inquiries.

I learned without delay that Stonewall Jackson had never visited that town during the war.

They showed me the house where Mrs. Frietchie had lived,—an old-fashioned, two-story building, somewhat dilapidated. The family had all moved away, they said; but by dint of inquiry I discovered a grand-niece. She lived in a neat, comfortable house, in perfect order.

A pleasant, matronly lady received me affably, and when I told her that I had come from New York to gain information respecting the war heroine, Mrs. Frietchie, she showed me to the easiest chair in the parlor and proceeded to entertain me.

"Nobody could have been more surprised than the family were," she said, "when my grand-aunt's name appeared in print, for she had always been a very modest woman, never dreaming of notoriety."

The little story of the flag was soon told, and is as follows:

"When a company of Confederate soldiers entered the town the loyal portion of the population closed their front shutters and retired to their back apartments. Grand-aunt would have been the very last to have shown herself at a window or to have spoken to the intruders. She sat in a back room, with her head leaning on her hand, all the time the town was occupied by the rebels. But as soon as the news reached us that a Union troop was approaching she lifted her head and ordered the shutters to be opened. When she heard the music she went out on the porch, followed by us all, and waved a white handkerchief to the boys in blue.

"Then the soldiers cheered, and my brother said, 'Why, grand-aunt, you ought to have a flag.' He ran into the house and brought out a little one of his own, which she took into her hand and waved as high as she could. Seeing the venerable, white-haired lady waving the little flag brought a storm of cheering from the soldiers as they marched past. Three or four of the officers left the ranks and ran up on the porch to shake hands with grand-aunt, when she led them into the parlor and sent us for cake and wine—both of her own making.

The gentlemen each took a morsel of cake, swallowed a glass of wine, shook hands with us all, and ran to overtake the company."

"And is that all?" I asked, as the lady paused.

She smiled as she answered, "That is the whole, full, and true account of Barbara Frietchie and her flag.

"We tried in every way," she added, "to discover the author of the fiction, but we utterly failed. It was surmised, however, to have been the work of a certain popular romancer, who imposed it on the gentle poet.

"But the flag was real," she said, after a short pause. "So, when we saw it was immortalized, we hunted for it, found it, and gave it a place of honor," and she pointed to a little, old flag standing in a china vase on the mantel.

I regarded the little memento with much interest. But the lady had another simple heirloom to show me. Conspicuous among some pretty ornaments on a small *etagère* stood an old-fashioned, Britannia-metal tea-pot.

"No doubt that has a history," I said, observing the ancient article.

"That," said my informant, "is one of the most precious things that my grand-aunt possessed." And she proceeded to narrate its history.

"During the Revolutionary War, when the American army was under its very darkest cloud, my grand-aunt's father,—my great-grandfather,—one day found General Washington, with a few comrades, or attendants, wet, weary, hungry, and thirsty themselves, and their horses almost exhausted. He begged them to stop and come into his house, and let their horses be led into his stable, so that the whole party might be rested and refreshed, by which they would travel much faster afterwards. They were persuaded; and my grand-aunt, then a young girl, waited on the gentlemen, bringing them slippers and socks to wear while their own socks and boots were drying, and water and towels to wash their hands and faces. Meanwhile her mother prepared a nice supper and tea for them, and her father cleaned and fed their horses.

"That was a memorable visit. Grand-aunt often spoke of it. And after the gentlemen rode away—themselves and their horses in comfortable condition—her mother washed and dried the teapot, put it on a place of honor in the parlor, and said it never should be used again. 'After the distinction it received to-day,' she said, 'it shall never again be put to common use.' And so it has stood in dignity for all those scores of years."

I came away much pleased with my call upon the grand-niece of Barbara Frietchie, only regretting that I had not visited Frederick during the lifetime of the venerable lady herself.

THE JUNIPER-STREET EPISODE

By Ellis Parker Butler



THREE men were closeted in the private office of the Mayor of the town of Hempstead.

One was the president of the First National Bank and owner of the Hempstead Electric Street Railway. He sat with the skirts of his frock-coat drawn over his knees, and held his silk hat in one hand, while with the other he stroked his long brown beard. He was a massive man and filled the chair in which he sat. Nature had made him pay for the beard in kind, for the top of his large head was bald and the skin was glossily clean. He leaned slightly forward as he delivered his ultimatum.

"The road is losing money every day, but if we could extend it across Juniper Street to the cemetery through Shantytown we might make it pay, and that is what must be done. You must fill the creek and run Juniper Street through to Eighth Street. It would be a benefit to the Third Ward. It should have been done long ago, and you must do it now. You know very well you could not have carried the city without my influence in the First Ward, and you owe me this much."

The Mayor tapped his feet on the floor, looked at his finger-nails, and then at Alderman McGinnis.

"Well, Mac," he said, "what do you say?"

"It's all up with me if we do," responded the Alderman. "You know the row the boys made when we tried it before. The whole kittle of 'em over in Shantytown would go back on me. I know 'em. They've made themselves all special gardeens of Widow O'Leary, an' if we touch her shanty my name's Dennis, sure."

The President of the street-railway arose and pulled his hat firmly over his brow.

"Well," he said, "you can fix it to suit yourselves. If you don't put the street through, I'll have to support some man who will."

When the door closed behind him the two men were silent for awhile. The Mayor took his penknife from his pocket and opened and closed a blade, while Alderman McGinnis puffed at his cigar.

"Well, what are you goin' to do about it?" asked McGinnis at length. "Is it him or me loses?"

"He's right about the First Ward," said the Mayor slowly.

"That means I lose," laughed McGinnis. "I thought I would. I thought so when you sent for me. You fellows had it all fixed up before, didn't you?"

The Mayor smiled. "You see it's this way, Mac," he said, laying his hand on the Alderman's knee. "I can't get along without that First Ward vote, but neither can you carry the Third unless I pull the Nob Hill votes your way. I don't want to go against you, but——"

"But you can get along without me," said McGinnis good-naturedly. "All right! Looks like it was up to me, don't it? I rather guess the bloody Third will have a new Alderman next year."

"Unless you can get Widow O'Leary to move," suggested Fitzgerald.

"Move?" said the Alderman, doubling his fist and striking his knee. "You couldn't git her to move in a hundred years! Remember the last time we tried?"

The Mayor laughed. "It is rather a tough proposition," he said, "but you see what you can do, and I'll go up and see her myself, and maybe we can persuade her."

The next afternoon the Mayor and Alderman McGinnis called on Widow O'Leary.

She lived in a shack of rough boards on the edge of the hill overlooking the hollow through which Connor's Creek ran.

The shanty would have stood in the middle of Juniper Street if the street had not ended there, but when she had pre-empted the shanty there had been no thought of putting the street through, and the dwellers in Shantytown had made themselves guardians of her home, and as long as she wished to stay where she was they upheld her and fought anyone who suggested tearing down her shack or extending Juniper Street.

And she had no intention of moving. "Here Oi am, an' here Oi'll stay!" she told McGinnis and the Mayor, and no bribe could affect her resolution. Having said so much, she closed her lips over the stem of her black clay pipe and hobbled around the shanty to her pigsty.

"It's little these pollytishuns care for us," said Mrs. McGuire, "an' little sh'u'd we care for thim. It's a cowl'd worruld, Missus O'Leary, an' a hard wan for us poor widdys. Them that roides the strates in carridges thinks little av thim as was wance as good as thim if not better, says Oi."

"Thru'e fer yez, Missus McGuire, an' so Oi always says mesilf, exceptin' Missus Terry, an' she's a leddy if iver was wan. Oi do well

be rememberin' how she kem roidin' up to me very dure in her carridge, a-makin' me a fri'ndly visit, an' lavin' her card on me as swate as butter, an' sayin' 'Oi hope Oi foind ye well, Missus O'Leary, ma'am, an' whin ye be up me way, dhrop in.'"

"How long ago that was Oi dunno," the old woman said sadly, "an' Oi'm sorra to say it's not yit hev Oi been there, for Oi do be so bad wid rhumatiz these days Oi fale the divvil in me jint's av Oi do but go to fade the pig (Saint Patherick make him fat), an' he goes hungry some days, me not bein' able to git to his sthy, but, Saints bliss us all, Oi'll dhrop in on Missus Terry yit some day."

"So ye will," said Mrs. McGinnis sympathetically.

For three years Widow O'Leary had cherished the memory of the day when Mrs. Terry, the wife of the wholesale grocer, had visited her, and she lost no chance of dwelling upon the honor nor of bewailing her inability to repay the visit.

Widow O'Leary could walk only with the aid of two canes, and when at her spryest the journey from the house to the pigsty was the limit of her endurance. Mrs. Terry lived half a mile farther up the hill.

"Poor sowl!" said Mrs. McGuire to her neighbor, Mrs. Dale, "it's little the loikes av her'll be takin' tay wid Missus Terry, Oi'm thinkin', nor goin' that way at all, unless she goes rattlin' by in her coffin wan o' these days."

"An' will they be makin' her git aff the strate?" inquired Mrs. Dale anxiously.

"They wull not!" said Mrs. McGuire decidedly. "She'll not move an inch. Me bye Moike says that if wan av thim touches hands to her shanty niver a vote will McGinnis git in Shantytown. It's a shame for thim to bother the loife out av the ould leddy, it is that. But McGinnis knows."

"It's enough to bre'k me heart to hear her talkin' av takin' tay wid Missus Terry," said Mrs. Dale, wiping her eyes. "Is her pig doin' foine?"

"He is that," said Mrs. McGuire. "He's a dacent baste, an' fat as a miller's wife."

"Praise be! An' how's the bye?"

"Me Moike? Foine, God bliss him, an' McGinnis says he'll hev him on the foorce next year." Mrs. McGuire tried vainly to hide her pride in this announcement, and observing that Mrs. Dale was duly impressed she ended her visit.

"Dhrop in on me, Missus Dale, dear, an' take a sup o' tay wid me," she said. "Oi must be gettin' along home wid me, for Moike'll be back by now."

When Mrs. McGuire reached home Mike was there. He was a

big, broad Irishman, and he was sitting on the door-sill, smoking his pipe. He looked up as his mother came through the garden gate.

"It's all off," he said. "Oi don't git on the foorce."

Mrs. McGuire threw up her hands in dismay.

"McGinnis won't git in ag'in next year," he explained. "They be wantin' Widdy O'Leary to move ag'in, an' if they move her he's out, an' if they don't he's out. Oi just see him." He knocked the ashes from his pipe and put it in his pocket. "Barrin' th' Widdy decides to want to move, McGinnis don't count."

While Mrs. McGuire prepared tea her mind was as busy as her hands, and when she had poured Mike's cup she sat back in her chair and questioned him. When he had explained the complications of the political situation and she had grasped it, she asked him where it was proposed to move Mrs. O'Leary. Mike did not know.

"There's a heap more tay in the taykittle," she said, rising. "Oi be going to see Alderman McGinnis. Oi'll be back gin ye're done atin'."

She found the Alderman at table, and resolutely declined Mrs. McGinnis's hearty invitation to take a bite.

"Oi kem in about Widdy O'Leary," she explained, shortly. "Where be ye thinkin' they'll move her to, Mister McGinnis?"

"I don't know," he said; "somewhere on the other side of town, like enough. They'd move her anywhere to git rid of her."

"An' be it thrue ye won't be elected if ye don't git her off th' strate, Mister McGinnis?" she asked eagerly.

"True as you sit there, Mrs. McGuire," said McGinnis.

"Listen to the mon!" said Mrs. McGuire amiably. "Well, mebbey Widdy McGuire kin do a thing or two yit that all ye great wans can't."

She took the cup of tea Mrs. McGinnis had prepared for her and steadied the saucer on her knee. McGinnis watched her take a sip. She watched him over the edge of the teacup.

"It's foine tay ye have, Missus McGinnis," she said, and then turned to the Alderman. "Me bye Moike has the heart av him set on gittin' on th' foorce, Mister McGinnis, an' woe's me if ye lose nixt year, sir. Do ye give me your worrud, sir, that me bye goes on th' foorce, an' Oi'll tind to Widdy O'Leary, sir."

Mr. McGinnis laid his knife on his plate and swung his chair around.

"If you make Mrs. O'Leary want to move, ma'am, I'll put Mike on the force next year. You have my word, Mrs. McGuire," he said.

Mrs. McGuire drained her teacup and arose.

"Oi'll do it," said she, and she did. She dropped in on Widow O'Leary the next morning, taking her a quarter pound of tea, and easily led the conversation to Mrs. Terry's visit and Widow O'Leary's long postponed return call.

"But it's beyant me, Missus O'Leary, how ye can bear to be missin' the chanst to dhrop in on her an' take a fri'ndly cup o' tay, whin the chanst is thrown at your fate loike," she said reproachfully.

Mrs. O'Leary puffed at her pipe. "Oi niver heard av the chanst," she said. "Do ye be foolin' wid me, Missus McGuire?"

"Shame an ye for sayin' the worrud, Missus O'Leary," said Mrs. McGuire. "Far be it from me to be foolin' wid ye. But it's not me as wud think more than wance whin Oi have the chanst to roide right to her dure as foine as if Oi had me own carridge, Missus O'Leary."

"Talk sinse, Missus McGuire, please, ma'am," said Mrs. O'Leary. "Hev ye gone loony, talkin' o' carridges to the loikes av a poor widdy loike me?"

Mrs. McGuire shook her head sadly. "Oi dunno phwat to think av ye, Missus O'Leary!" she exclaimed. "But mebby ye dunno where th' city wants to move ye?"

Mrs. O'Leary shook her head.

"Think o' that, now!" said Mrs. McGuire. "An' they didn't tell ye? Mary befri'nd us! Why, where but over th' hill, ma'am, to a foine bit o' ground wid grass to kape the pig fat all summer, ma'am. Oi wud loike to hev a shanty along side av ye there, ma'am. Oi wud so! But 'twas not that Oi was thinkin' av, Missus O'Leary, but how you'd go to git there, ma'am. Roight past Missus Terry's dure! Think av that, now! Here ye'd sit loike a leddy in your own shanty, ma'am, wid the shanty goin' along the strate aisy loike, not knowin' ye was movin' at all-at all, an' lookin' out av the windy a-seein' the soights. An' whin ye got to Missus Terry's very dure, ma'am, they'd wait 'till ye made a fri'ndly call an' took a cup o' tay, loike! It's envyin' ye Oi am, ma'am. Well, as Oi always towld Larry whin he was aloive, (God rist his sowl!) some are born wid chances an' some wid unchances."

She sighed deeply.

Mrs. O'Leary laid her pipe on the table beside her and arose.

"Phwat hev Oi been thinkin' av, Missus McGuire," she said, "not cookin' a sup o' tay for ye! Is Moike well these days? A foine big lad he's got, Oi hear. An' mebby if ye be passin' by again the day, Missus McGuire, dear, you'll have a bit o' black thread in your pocket. Oi hev a great tear in me black dress, ma'am, an' Oi w'u'd not loike to be callin' on Missus Terry in rags an' tatters."

"Moike," said Mrs. McGuire that night when her burly son swung up to her door, "you'll be swingin' a club as grand as a king nixt year. It's foine ye'll be lookin' in blue, wid rows av brass buttons on befront an' behint."

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The History of Medicine in the United States. By Francis Randolph Packard, M.D.

"A collection of facts and documents relating to the history of medical science in this country, from the earliest English colonization to the year 1800, with a supplemental chapter on the Discovery of Anæsthesia," as Dr. Packard states in his sub-title. "An effort has been made in the following pages to collect as many facts as possible regarding the rise of medical science in this country. But few data are accessible on the subject, but I trust that this book may have the effect of stimulating others to work in the same direction. Although there have been many books and essays published regarding the local medical history of different parts of the United States, I know of no other effort in the direction of a general history of early medicine. The work has occupied many years, and has been truly a labor of love to the author, who hopes it may possess a corresponding interest to others. It should be regarded rather as a series of essays and compilations, than in the light of a continuous historical work."

Dr. Packard writes entertainingly and instructively, quoting much from original documents, concerning Medical Events connected with the Early History of the English Colonies in America, Epidemic Sickness and Mortality in North America from its Earliest Discovery by the English to the year 1800, Medical Education before the Foundation of Medical Schools, The Earliest Medical Schools in the United States, The Medical Profession in the War for Independence, The Earliest Hospitals, History of the Medical Societies founded before the year 1800, Pre-Revolutionary Medical Biography, Medical Legislation in the Colonies, and The Discovery of Anæsthesia, with several Appendices, including a List of Authorities. The state of the medical profession of this period, during which it was struggling against ignorance, prejudice, hide-bound custom, and lack of facilities for anything better, is almost unbelievable. In only a few instances among the colonizing expeditions was a physician or surgeon regularly appointed, and in 1609 Captain John Smith was forced to go to England for surgical treatment of an injury by the explosion of gunpowder, "For there was neither chirurgéon nor chirurgery at the fort." And all through the colonizing period, as to-day in the regions recently brought under the settler's hand, the cunning layman assumed the functions of the physician, placing faith in a store of prescriptions, possibly from some master-physician at "home," or in the fruits of long experience with the ailments of human kind. A worse phase even than the absence of qualified practitioners was found in the spread of quackery: "In 1758 William Smith, in his 'History of New York,' wrote: 'A few physicians among us are eminent for their skill. Quacks abound like locusts in Egypt, and too many have been recommended to a full practice and profitable subsistence; this is less to be wondered at, as the profession is under no kind of regulation. Loud as the call is, to our shame be it remembered, we have no law to protect the lives of the King's subjects from the malpractice of pretenders. Any man at his pleasure sets up for physician, apothecary, and chirurgéon. No candidates are either examined, licensed, or sworn to fair practice.'"

But to quote at random from such a wealth of valuable matter is an injustice to the book, which is of interest to laymen as well as physicians. From the Lippincott Press.

The Chemical Analysis of Iron. By Andrew Alexander Blair. Illustrated. Fourth Edition.

The *fourth edition* of this standard work, the intention and scope of which are well stated in the Preface to the First Edition: "The various methods for the analysis of iron and steel, as well as the descriptions of special apparatus to facilitate the performance of the analytical work, are so widely distributed through transactions of societies, journals, reviews, periodicals, and works on general analytical chemistry that only the possessor of a chemical library can command the literature of the subject. It is my object in the following pages to bring within the compass of a single volume, as nearly as possible, all the methods of real value to the iron analyst, and in doing this to give the credit of originality for the different methods and improvements to the proper persons. In many cases this has been very difficult, and I shall be glad to have any mistake I have made brought to my attention.

"The work presupposes some knowledge of general and analytical chemistry, and some practical experience in laboratory work and manipulation, as it is intended to be a guide for the student of iron chemistry only. For such persons the details of the descriptions of the methods will, I hope, often prove of great assistance. With very few exceptions, these descriptions are the results of my own experience in the use of the methods, and the details are those that seemed to me to be of importance in their practical performance. Many of the special forms of apparatus are of my own contrivance; they have proved extremely useful to me, and I hope may facilitate in some cases the work of iron chemists, to whom often very little is given and of whom very much is required."

That the book has stood the test of use during the twelve years since the publication of its first edition, and that new editions have been called for from time to time, culminating in this (J. B. Lippincott Company), in which such changes have been made as were necessitated by the progress of the art, is a proof not only of the lack of such a book, but of the fitness of this book to supply that lack.

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